United Nations A/68/PV.31

General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

31st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 8 October 2013, 5.45 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe .... (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Errázuriz (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 5.40 p.m.

High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development

Agenda item 18 (*continued*)

Follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2008 Review Conference

The Acting President: I shall now read the concluding remarks of the President of the General Assembly.

We have come to the conclusion of the sixth High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development. I would like to express my appreciation to all delegations that participated. Their constructive interventions have contributed to the successful outcome of the meeting. I am grateful to the Secretary-General, the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for their opening remarks (see A/68/PV29), which were followed by many thoughtful statements by representatives of Member States and institutional stakeholders in the plenary meetings.

I am also very pleased with the valuable contributions of others — institutional stakeholders, civil society and the private sector — who engaged in a true dialogue in our round tables and the informal interactive dialogue. The interactive nature of our discussions and the participation of such a wide range of stakeholders exemplify the inclusive spirit of the financing for development process. All of their remarks have provided an important reminder that we need to uphold the foundations of the global partnership for development as set out in the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, as we accelerate the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and move towards the post-2015 development agenda.

A full summary of the High-level Dialogue will be made available at a later date. At this point, I would like to highlight some key points expressed over the past two days.

There was a broad consensus among all participants that the Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration on Financing for Development provided a strong conceptual underpinning for future discussions on financing for development.

Participants agreed that we should avoid any duplication of effort and arrive at a coherent financing framework for a unified post-2015 development agenda with sustainability at its core. Such a financing strategy should build on existing international agreements, as enshrined in the Monterrey Consensus, the Doha Declaration and related outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits.

As the world has changed considerably over the past 10 years, the conceptual framework needs to be adapted to new circumstances and challenges, particularly those related to the integration of the social, economic and

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environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Many of those issues have already been incorporated in the financing for development process. In that context, many participants noted the important role of the recently established Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, which will propose options on an effective financing strategy for sustainable development.

Many delegations called for the follow-up international conference on financing for development to be held before the end of 2015, in order for the conference to contribute meaningfully to the post-2015 development agenda. Delegations called for intergovernmental consultations on issues related to the conference, with the participation of all Member States, to begin before the end of 2013. There were also calls for a financing for development commission as a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council to bridge the gap between policy-making and the implementation of commitments.

While recognizing that much had been achieved since the Millennium Declaration was adopted, in 2000, we must redouble our efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs. Since progress in reaching the development goals has been uneven between and within countries, we must focus on the goals that are most off-track and on countries that face particular development challenges.

More than five years since the global financial and economic crisis, the international financial system continues to be plagued by vulnerability. The sovereign debt crisis in Europe and the uneven global recovery have led to heightened risk aversion. The de-leveraging of financial institutions continues, particularly in Europe.

Although growth prospects for 2014 appear to have slightly improved, risks remain. In particular, unconventional monetary measures adopted in major developed countries have spillover effects on emerging economies. At the same time, there is a risk that an early undoing of those measures could impact the nascent recovery in some developed countries and create additional volatility in developing countries.

While financing needs for sustainable development are extremely large, they represent a relatively small portion of global savings. The challenge lies in facilitating an international financial system that would direct a small amount of investment towards sustainable development.

It is important to extend the regulatory framework beyond the banking sector to the entire financial system, including "shadow" banking. The development and adaptation of international financial regulations would benefit from the greater representation and participation of developing countries in the regulatory reform process.

Institutional investors, such as pension funds and sovereign wealth funds, that have long-term liabilities are an important potential source for long-term financing for sustainable development. However, to date their investment in critical areas, such as infrastructure, environmental financing, innovation and small and medium enterprises, remains limited. It was pointed out that there was a need to better align investor incentives with long-term investment.

Foreign direct investment inflows, one of the most stable private sources of international capital, have been falling globally. However, the decline has been greatest in developed countries, with inflows to resource-rich least developed countries remaining strong. In that context, policies to promote long-term sustainable foreign direct investment are needed, especially in areas such as environmental investments.

In that context, participants stressed that the private sector would not invest unless there were profitable bankable investments. Representatives from the private sector pointed to a number of structural constraints that prevented investment in developing countries, including regulatory risks and weak institutions. It was pointed out that public financing could play a complementary role in helping developing countries overcome those obstacles and in leveraging private financing.

Domestic resource mobilization remains critical. Since it is ultimately driven by inclusive and sustained economic growth, domestic resource mobilization is key to ensuring effective domestic macroeconomic policymaking and an enabling international environment.

Developing countries face a range of common challenges in raising resources, and that is particularly pronounced in the most vulnerable countries. Those countries must continue to build their capacity to collect public revenues. The strengthening of international tax cooperation must continue in that regard. Several delegations proposed to upgrade the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters to an intergovernmental body.

The pressures on public finances in many donor countries following the global crisis led to a fall in official development assistance (ODA) and a reduction of fiscal space. That development could threaten the gains made by many developing countries, least developed countries in particular, in achieving the MDGs. A renewed effort by major donors is necessary to reach ODA commitments of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI), with a target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNI to the least developed countries by 2015, taking into account the quality of such aid.

The expansion of South-South cooperation is a welcome development. It should not be seen, however, as a substitute for traditional aid flows, but rather as complementary financing and technical resources for development. There were some calls for increased dialogue among traditional and emerging donors to increase coherence in the aid architecture. In addition, innovative sources of financing were seen as having potential, but should be seen as additional to existing ODA.

There were also calls for an early conclusion to the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations of the World Trade Organization (WTO). During the past year, the recovery in world trade following the financial crisis lost momentum, mostly through weakened demand in developed countries. In particular, the least developed countries' share in global trade remains low, at only 1.1 per cent. The Doha Round has the potential to contribute significantly to more equitable and inclusive growth. The ministerial conference of the WTO to be held in Bali in December could lead to progress in important areas, including trade facilitation, agriculture negotiation and development.

Sovereign debt is another important area of development financing. Today, debt overhangs in developing countries are relatively limited. Nevertheless, some developing countries remain critically indebted, and the debt of developed countries continues to pose a risk for the global economy, and therefore needs timely and effective resolution. In order to enhance the role of foreign borrowing for growth and development, efforts are needed to strengthen three pillars: responsible lending and borrowing; debt management; and a framework for sovereign-debt restructuring. There were calls for the United Nations to guide an institution-building process to establish a debt work-out mechanism, with fair and equitable representation of the interests of debtors.

Our discussions over the past two days have been quite instructive and inspiring. We have built momentum towards redoubling efforts in achieving the MDGs and towards advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. In participants' statements, I heard genuine concern about the uncertainty of development prospects for the world's poorest and most vulnerable, but also for donor countries, which are now faced with mounting debts and tight budgets.

However, I have also sensed optimism that we can come together to meet the challenges of sustainable development. The resources are there; they just need to be allocated effectively. That requires a true multi-stakeholder effort and a global partnership encompassing all stakeholders, in order to expedite the mobilization of financial resources for sustainable development, both public and private, at the national, regional and international levels.

I thank participants very much for their attendance and participation in this event.

I now declare closed the sixth High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.

United Nations A/68/PV.32

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

32nd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 9 October 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe .... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/504)

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, may I take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today?

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that when the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee. I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: requests under Article 19 of the Charter", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/5).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 138.

Agenda items 14 and 118 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/68/L.4)

The President: Members will recall that under agenda items 14 and 118, the Assembly adopted resolution 68/1 at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September. Members are reminded that the debate on agenda item 14 and agenda item 118 will be held jointly with item 125, entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals", on 20 November.

Permit me now to make a statement.

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It is my pleasure to present for adoption the outcome document that was endorsed by Heads of State and Government and heads of delegations at last week's special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the outset, I wish to highlight that this outcome document is, first and foremost, a call for action in the accelerated commitment to address the gaps and unevenness in the MDG process and to respond to the formidable challenges that remain on the path to their fulfilment.

Many here will no doubt recall that at the special event I invited the Secretary-General to compile a matrix of commitments pledged by Member States, international organizations, private-sector partners and civil society associated with the acceleration of the achievement of the MDGs. The final results will soon be made available, but initially several billion dollars have been mobilized, and actions and pledges are coming from dozens of countries. With some 825 days to go, we must remain vigilant in our collective quest to fulfil the MDGs.

The document before the Assembly for adoption also sets the initial signposts to define an ambitious and inclusive post-2015 development agenda. Our collective commitment to this text should catalyse a final push to create real and meaningful change by making further progress on the MDGs and defining the contours of a development agenda with the potential to have an impact on the trajectory of sustainable development for decades to come.

Such an agreement required a collective sense of partnership by all parties. I pay special tribute to participants' collective efforts under the able leadership of the Permanent Representatives of Ireland and South Africa, whom I wish to commend today for their tireless efforts. I wish also to highlight the invaluable stewardship of our Secretary-General and his dedicated team for their efforts aimed at ensuring a systemic commitment to an integrated development framework.

I readily acknowledge the fact that this outcome document, however significant, represents just a first step in a series of efforts that will require us to work collectively between now and 2015 if we are to achieve the dual goals of fulfilling the remaining MDGs and launching a successor arrangement that is the post-2015 development agenda.

Today more than ever the depth, breadth and scope of these twin challenges require our concerted efforts and collective action. That means that new levels of support, collaboration and partnership will be needed from all stakeholders. Earlier this week we heard how reliable financing will be critical in driving this dual-track process. Countries will need to make every effort to mobilize domestic resources, yet at the same time there is a vital role and need for donor countries to meet their official development assistance commitments, including through the provision of reliable and timely financial resources.

During this session of the General Assembly, a number of ongoing processes will begin to converge in preparation for consideration and, ultimately, negotiations at the start of the sixty-ninth session. The outcome document speaks to these processes, emphasizing the need to achieve meaningful, balanced and forward-looking arrangements and results within the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, and in the process to develop options for a mechanism facilitating the transfer of technology. My team and I stand ready to provide assistance in this collective quest as the Assembly makes progress in all these areas.

The document also underscores that the preparation for the post-2015 development agenda will benefit from the three high-level events and the three thematic debates I will convene during the second part of the sixty-eighth session. My team and I will endeavour to make them complementary and mutually reinforcing so as to enable further progress on each and every one of the priority areas I have identified, all of which are reflected in the outcome document.

While there is much to be done, we can now say that we have begun the intergovernmental process aimed at putting in place a post-2015 development agenda, which will require sustained and committed work from each and every member. This is indeed an exciting time for our United Nations. I welcome the adoption of this resolution, and I look forward to setting the stage for the post-2015 development agenda together with all in the Assembly.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.4, entitled "Outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals". In connection with the draft resolution, I shall give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/68/L.4, entitled "Outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals", I wish to put on record, on behalf of the Secretary-General, the following statement on the financial implications, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

In operative paragraph 26 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would request the President of the General Assembly to convene, in a timely manner, intergovernmental consultations to achieve agreement on organizational modalities for a summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. Under the terms of paragraph 26, the decision on the organizational aspects and the dates of the summit are yet to be determined. Therefore, in the absence of modalities for meetings and documentation of the summit, it is not possible at present to determine the conference servicing requirements. Thus, as soon as specific decisions on the dates, format, scope and modalities are determined, the matter will be reported to the Assembly in accordance with rule 153 of its rules of procedure.

The date of the meeting will have to be determined in consultation with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. Should the Assembly adopt draft resolution A/68/L.4, the Secretary-General will submit details of the financial implications, if applicable, in accordance with established procedures when the modalities of the meeting are determined.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.4, entitled "Outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/68/L.4 was adopted (resolution 68/6).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Fiji, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Thomson (Fiji): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group welcomes the adoption of resolution 68/6.

First let me express the Group's appreciation to you, Mr. President, for submitting the outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and for its adoption today by the General Assembly. I wish also to convey the Group's appreciation to the co-facilitators of the consultation process for this outcome document — the Permanent Representatives of South Africa and Ireland, whose tireless efforts and commitment have ensured that we have arrived successfully at this important occasion today. We wish to underscore the importance of this outcome document to us, as the Group of 77 (G-77) and China, and to the General Assembly in capturing our collective will as we move forward steadfastly towards achieving our development aspirations for this millennium.

While the Millennium Development Goals were focused on developing countries, what has been outlined in the outcome document is intended to result in the formulation of a post-2015 development agenda that is applicable to all. The road map set out in the document ensures that the international community as a whole is involved and engaged throughout in a transparent intergovernmental process to

> "craft a strong post-2015 development agenda, that will build on the foundations laid by the Millennium Development goals, complete the unfinished business and respond to new challenges" (*resolution 68/6, para. 16*).

During the special event, our leaders expressed the view that we should take advantage of this historic opportunity to reaffirm our collective political commitment and redouble our efforts to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs with a sense of urgency and determination.

As we set our sights on the framework that will take us beyond 2015, it is important that we reaffirm our resolve that our work must remain guided by the principles and values enshrined in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex), and the outcomes of all the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

We wish also to reiterate that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is of paramount importance as a guiding principle in crafting the future development agenda. As developing countries, we reaffirm our conviction that the new development agenda must take into account our differing national circumstances and development priorities.

In line with the request reflected in paragraph 26 of the outcome document — that the President of the General Assembly convene, in a timely manner, intergovernmental consultations to achieve agreement on organizational modalities for the development summit in 2015 — I wish to express the readiness of the G-77 and China to work with you, Sir, and our partners in making that a reality.

Mr. Donoghue (Ireland): I make these remarks on behalf of both co-facilitators of the special event. It was a great honour and privilege for me and for my predecessor, Anne Anderson, to be appointed co-facilitator of the special event, along with my colleague, Ambassador Mamabolo of South Africa. I am therefore particularly pleased to be present for the formal adoption of the outcome document of the Millennium Development Goals special event as resolution 68/6, following its endorsement by our Heads of State and Government and heads of delegations on 25 September.

We would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank colleagues for their hard work over many months in coming to an agreement on this important consensus outcome document. It is one that we can be very pleased with. It makes very clear the urgency of accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in all developing countries, and particularly in those countries most lagging behind. It calls for particular attention to be paid to the most off-track MDGs and to those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged. It highlights the central role of the strengthened global partnership for development. It sets out the contours of the post-2015 development agenda and a road map to 2015, which will help to guide our work over the coming two years, culminating in a summit in September 2015 for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda.

We have much to do in these two years. We are in agreement that we must achieve the promise of the MDGs. In addition, we will be working to craft an ambitious post-2015 agenda. We firmly believe that the MDGs special event and its outcome will help us in this important endeavour.

In closing, on behalf of Ambassador Mamabolo and myself, may I thank you, Sir, and your predecessor Mr. Jeremić for your leadership, and the Secretariat's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, conference services and others in the United Nations system for their assistance. Finally, once again, I thank colleagues for their advice, assistance and hard work in agreeing the outcome document that we have just adopted.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): On behalf of the European Union and its member States, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on the way in which you chaired the special event. Let me also congratulate you on your decision to place the subjects that were on the agenda of the special event and the whole post-2015 issue at the heart of your presidency.

I should also like to thank the two co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of South Africa and Ireland, for their tireless efforts. Their work is greatly appreciated.

We welcome the adoption of the outcome document (resolution 68/6), which represents a key step forward and a good balance between the positions expressed over months of consultations. We welcome the fact that it captures in a concise manner key messages both on the final push towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the run-up to 2015, and on charting the way forward post-2015. The document is particularly valuable in underscoring that we face common challenges and have a shared agenda. It paves the way for a more sustainable, equitable and prosperous world for all, a world free of poverty.

We welcome the resolve to target the most off-track MDGs and that among and within developing countries, those that have been left furthest behind require our most urgent attention and support. We welcome the emphasis on the Monterrey/Doha framework on financing for development as a key reference point. National ownership, with each country bearing the primary responsibility for its development, and the mobilization of all resources, public and private, domestic and international, and their effective and innovative use will be crucial to implementing the future framework.

With respect to the road map to the post-2015 framework, we appreciate that key elements have been agreed and are included in the final text, notably the need for a coherent approach that integrates in a balanced manner the three dimensions of sustainable development, working towards a single universal framework and set of goals, and the reference to peace and security, gender equality, human rights, the rule of law and democratic governance.

We will continue to be guided by the values and principles enshrined in previously agreed texts and reaffirm all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities as set out in principle 7 of the Rio Declaration.

We wish to restate our views on this matter. We underline that principle 7 is explicitly related to global environmental degradation and the respective pressures. Agreeing on the continuous relevance of this principle cannot be interpreted as its extension to the entirety of issues to be addressed in the post-2015 development agenda. The world has changed dramatically over the last decades, including the nature and magnitude of our global challenges, their cause and effects, and our respective capabilities to address them. The post-2015 development agenda needs to respond to these evolving dynamics. The European Union and its member States are committed to addressing these evolving realities and responsibilities, and acknowledge the particular situation and concerns of the most vulnerable countries. All Member States must play their part in support of countries most lagging behind.

We will engage constructively in all upcoming processes whose outputs will feed into the preparation of the September 2015 summit. We still have a long way to go. The stakes have never been so high, the challenges never so great. But business as usual is not an option.

Ms. Robl (United States of America): We are very pleased to adopt this outcome document (resolution 68/6) of the special event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The outcome document reflects the strength of our collective commitment to fight poverty, accelerate the achievement of the MDGs, and unite around a common vision for the future. We would like to express our particular appreciation for the excellent facilitation provided by the Permanent Representatives of South Africa and Ireland, as well as for your own role, Mr. President.

Our consensus demonstrates the determination of Member States to reach common ground on topics that are difficult yet critical for the post-2015 development agenda. This will provide a strong foundation for our work going forward. As we engage in follow-on discussions we should be mindful of staying within the overall budget allocations for 2014 and 2015.

Mr. Ueda (Japan): My delegation also welcomes the adoption of resolution 68/6 today. The special event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) held two weeks ago was a great success. In that regard, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the co-facilitators, the Ambassadors of Ireland and South Africa, as well as their team, and the Secretariat for their hard work and tremendous efforts to lead us to adopt the resolution in the General Assembly today.

The special event and its outcome document provide a great opportunity to renew our political commitment to achieving the MDGs by the end of 2015. The special event also succeeded in laying out a clear work plan to integrate various mediation processes on the post-2015 development agenda with a view to working towards a single framework and set of goals.

We think that such a process is very important to formulate an ambitious post-2015 development agenda. We therefore look forward to fruitful intergovernmental consultations, including on an agreement on organizational modalities for the summit guided by you, Mr. President, and we will constructively engage. In this regard, my delegation hopes that the modalities of the summit to be negotiated and decided will be the most efficient and cost-effective.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt): I should like to start by congratulating you, Mr. President, and registering our appreciation of the excellent work done by the two co-facilitators, the representatives of Ireland and South Africa.

I wish to associate my remarks with the statement and observations delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of the outcome document and joins the consensus in that regard. In this context, I would like to stress the following points.

Poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today. Eradicating poverty is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. That was reaffirmed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development after extensive negotiations and was finally adopted at the level of Heads of State and Government at the Conference. We believe that this balance should be preserved and not altered.

The world has undergone far-reaching changes in the past two decades. Significant progress has been made in many important fields of development through national and international efforts. Yet developing countries are still facing serious problems in advancing their level of development and changing the unfavourable international economic environment. The number of people living in absolute poverty has increased in many developing countries. In facing these challenges, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as well as the right to development, remain crucial as a foundation of current and future global development efforts, in particular for promoting the implementation of the global partnership for development.

My delegation understands that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities will continue to guide our work with respect to developing the post-2015 development agenda.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 14 and 118.

Agenda item 111 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/68/1)

The President: Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his annual report, document A/68/1, to the General Assembly at its 5th plenary meeting, on 24 September.

Mr. Ismail (Brunei Darussalam): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/68/1). The report provides a comprehensive and detailed overview of the challenges and opportunities for this Organization. Indeed, there is a need for the United Nations constantly to keep up and adapt to changing trends as well as to anticipate and address emerging and new challenges accordingly.

ASEAN greatly values its cooperation with the United Nations. The adoption of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the United Nations in 2011 affirmed the mutual commitment to further advance and intensify the level of cooperation and to strengthen the framework of cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations. In this connection, we welcome the adoption of resolution 67/110, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations". It identifies important points of cooperation that will help us to address global issues of mutual concern, including peace and security, sustainable growth and development, human rights and the rule of law.

ASEAN looks forward to the upcoming ASEAN-United Nations summit to be held on 10 October 2013 in Brunei Darussalam to review ASEAN-United Nations relations and to discuss its future direction as well as to exchange views on regional and international issues. We view this summit as an effective tool to strengthen the partnership between both organizations.

The theme for ASEAN this year "Our People, Our Future Together" is intended to highlight the important role that the people of ASEAN play in its community-building efforts to help ensure the region's future. ASEAN believes that each member State can prosper from the success of its neighbours, and at the same time individual and collective achievements will also contribute to the global development process. In this connection, during the recent Summit of the Group of 20 in St. Petersburg, Brunei Darussalam, as ASEAN Chair, affirmed the importance of achieving inclusive and sustainable growth. That very much remains a core ASEAN goal.

ASEAN also remains committed to establishing the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015. In this regard, we will continue to implement cooperation initiatives and measures that will support the free flow of trade, investment and people in the region, narrow development gaps and enhance ASEAN's competitiveness.

To achieve such inclusive and sustainable growth and the Millennium Development Goals and to move forward the post-2015 development agenda, ASEAN has also adopted the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on Youth Volunteerism and Entrepreneurship. That Declaration calls on young professionals to offer voluntary community services in areas such as rural development and poverty eradication, disaster relief, health, education and the environment, while at the same time supporting vulnerable groups and fostering entrepreneurial skills. In this regard, ASEAN notes the efforts of the Secretary-General in launching the "Global Education First Initiative" and the appointment of the first Envoy on Youth.

On security matters, ASEAN will continue to remain a net contributor to international peace and security based on the rule of law and the peaceful settlement of disputes. ASEAN upholds the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia as an essential instrument for governing stable relations between and among parties within and outside the region. ASEAN welcomed Norway's accession to the Treaty in July 2013.

ASEAN supports international disarmament efforts, particularly towards achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. ASEAN will continue its engagement with nuclear-weapon States in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the ASEAN Charter, particularly with regard to their signing of the Protocol to the Treaty without reservations and as early as possible. We also encourage further cooperation in line with the ASEAN Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (2013-2017).

In addition, various seminars and workshops were also held in cooperation with the United Nations, in particular on conflict prevention, preventive diplomacy and counter-terrorism.

On disaster-management and humanitarian assistance efforts, ASEAN established landmark cooperation among the defence forces of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) countries. This is to enhance confidence-building, regional capacity and coordination through the ADMM-Plus Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and Military Medicine Exercise, held in Brunei Darussalam from 16 to 20 June this year. That large-scale exercise, involving more than 3,000 personnel, enhanced practical cooperation in the area of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and built trust and confidence among the ADMM-Plus militaries.

Additionally, ASEAN held the ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Relief Exercise 2013, co-hosted by Thailand and the Republic of Korea from 7 to 11 May. That was one of the largest civilian-military exercises of its kind in the region. Besides that, we welcomed the Mentawai Megathrust Exercise 2013-2014 in Indonesia, which involved the East Asia Summit participating countries, from 20 to 26 April. The regional ASEAN Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise will be held sometime this month in Viet Nam.

On peacekeeping, the second meeting of the ADMM-Plus Experts Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations was held in Manila in June 2012, co-chaired by the Philippines and New Zealand. The meeting resulted in an initial database of profiles of the peacekeeping-related capabilities of participating States. With that database, areas of complementarity and cooperation can now be identified to help further boost the capacities of participating States, including in the efficient generation of forces for peacekeeping deployment. While the diversity of current peacekeeping operations capacity is a challenging reality, peacekeeping offers rich potential for furthering cooperation among States within and outside ASEAN.

On human rights, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration on 18 November 2012 in Phnom Penh and acknowledged that that Declaration was a milestone in the Association's efforts to promote and protect human rights in the region. We also welcomed the outcome of the international workshop on enhancing cooperation between United Nations and regional mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, held from 12 to 14 December 2012 in Geneva, as well as the outcome of the Intensive Learning Workshop on Women's Human Rights for the Regional and National Secretariats to ASEAN Human Rights Bodies, held from 18 to 21 March 2013 in Bali, Indonesia.

To conclude, we very much hope that the collective efforts of ASEAN will contribute towards the United Nations own work in promoting peace, security and stability, as well as inclusive and sustainable growth for all. It remains fully resolved to work closely to achieve those ends.

Mr. Misra (India): I am privileged to address the General Assembly today. Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

I thank the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization. It covers a wide spectrum of issues and provides information on the activities of the United Nations. It also underscores the global and interconnected nature of the challenges we face and highlights the unfinished agenda of development and reform. It is important that the sociopolitical challenges in the West Asian region be addressed in an inclusive and peaceful manner.

With fewer than 850 days remaining for their fulfilment, we need to accord the highest priority to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Substantial progress has been made in reducing poverty, yet our gains and progress have been uneven and short on expectations. The Secretary-General's report points out that almost 1 billion people will still live in extreme poverty in 2015. The eradication of poverty therefore must remain the core, overarching objective of the post-2015 development agenda, including under the sustainable development goals. The quest for sustainability will ring hollow as long as deep imbalances in the consumption of natural resources and carbon-intensive lifestyles in the developed world exist. The fact still remains that the richest billion people consume two thirds of the Earth's resources whereas the bottom billion consume a meagre 1 per cent.

On climate change, India remains fully committed to crafting an ambitious, balanced and comprehensive outcome to negotiations in accordance with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. As we embark on the process of framing sustainable development goals, crucial issues such as that of resource mobilization, be it official development assistance, technology transfer, trade or foreign direct investment, must find appropriate priority and be enshrined in the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and equity. Insofar as our development partnership initiatives go, we are resolved to carry forward and expand our multifaceted and vibrant cooperation with Africa, including through the framework of the India-Africa Forum Summit.

Similarly, we will continue to build on our commitments for enhanced cooperation with the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States within the overall rubric of South-South cooperation.

Terrorism remains a grave threat to security and stability everywhere and extracts a heavy toll of innocent lives throughout the world. From Africa to Asia we have seen several manifestations of this menace. The international community has long acknowledged the ever-present and pervasive threat posed by terrorism. No country, city or region is immune from this global scourge.

Yet, regrettably, we have failed ourselves by continuing to procrastinate on concluding the comprehensive convention against international terrorism. It is time that Member States summoned the necessary political will to agree to the comprehensive convention against international terrorism as a sound legal framework for the fight against terrorism. We need concerted global action. Such action should be predicated on zero tolerance towards terrorism and aimed at systematically dismantling the infrastructure of terrorism.

India has had a proud association with United Nations peacekeeping since its very inception. More than 150,000 of our uniformed personnel have participated in this flagship endeavour of the United Nations. As peacekeeping moves forward, we must remain mindful of the challenges of operating in increasingly complex environments. Not only should the mandates be realistic, but their framing should be inclusive of all stakeholders in a meaningful manner. Ambitious mandates require matching resources. We also need to be mindful of the safety of peacekeepers while crafting such mandates.

It is also imperative that those who threaten and attack United Nations peacekeepers be held accountable. Cases where United Nations peacekeepers have laid down their lives due to attacks by militias and non-State actors must be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators of such acts brought to justice expeditiously.

We note with appreciation the initiatives to modernize and reform the Secretariat, including through large-scale business transformation projects such as the new enterprise resource planning system, Umoja, International Public Sector Accounting Standards, managed mobility of Secretariat staff, and the capital master plan. While each involves considerable investment, we see them as important drivers in modernizing the United Nations.

However, it is our deep-rooted conviction that the relevance of the United Nations ultimately hinges on a more fundamental reform of its governance architecture, which is frozen in another era that perpetuates the rights of the "haves" of the mid-1940s. It is only through such governance reform that the United Nations can truly invigorate action on issues of pressing global concern, be it issues of peace and security, climate change, development, or human rights.

Let me therefore conclude by raising an issue that inexplicably does not find even a mention in the Secretary-General's report, and that is the important issue of Security Council reform, where intergovernmental negotiations have not made much progress in spite of a clear affirmation by an overwhelming majority of the Member States of the need for expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

We need to build on this by immediately commencing real negotiations based on a negotiating text, as is the case in all United Nations processes. It is imperative to impart a sense of urgency and momentum to this process by pressing for a results-based timeline to achieve early reforms of the Security Council.

The year 2015, which marks the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations as well as 10 years since the Millennium Summit Declaration, in which our Heads of State and Government mandated us to achieve early reforms of the Security Council, will therefore be an important occasion to deliver some concrete results and an expanded Security Council reflecting contemporary realities.

Mr. Och (Mongolia): First, I wish to extend my delegation's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization. I believe that our discussions, based on a thorough review and assessment of the work of the Organization, will stimulate new thinking on how we can scale up our efforts in response to the many challenges that the world community faces today, and in particular on ways of accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and on the process of defining the post-2015 development agenda. In this respect, Mongolia welcomes the outcome document of the special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the MDGs just adopted by the Assembly.

As the report states, the MDGs have improved the lives of billions of people and helped to set global and national priorities and fuel action on the ground. However, the report also reveals that unless we take resolute action, almost 1 billion people will still live in extreme poverty in 2015. Mothers will die needlessly in childbirth and children will suffer and die from preventable diseases. Fifty-seven million children are not in school, and 73 million young people are out of work. Therefore we need more concrete action.

I commend the Secretary-General for his important initiatives, including the launch of the Global Education First Initiative, which secured more than $1.5 billion in commitments.

Mongolia makes every effort to contribute to international endeavours aimed at achieving the MDGs. Promoting literacy and education are among our priorities at the national, regional and international levels. As members are well aware, Mongolia initiated a United Nations Literacy Decade, which was successfully observed from 2003 to 2012. It is gratifying to note that the Decade was marked by steady progress, with millions of young people and adults becoming literate. While national Governments were the prime movers in this regard, development partners played significant roles. In the positioning of literacy as a human right and a means to achieve sustainable development in poverty reduction, United Nations entities provided various forms of normative and operational support. I wish to commend them — in particular UNESCO, the main coordinator and implementing agency for the Decade — for their dedication and continued effort.

Another initiative put forward by Mongolia at the United Nations became a General Assembly resolution on education for democracy (resolution 67/18). The resolution recognizes that education is key to the strengthening of democratic institutions, the realization of human rights and the achievement of all international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It invites Governments, agencies and organizations of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to intensify their efforts to promote education for democracy. I wish to take this opportunity to draw the attention of Member States to the importance of implementing that resolution, as we will be reviewing its implementation at the next session of the General Assembly.

While accelerating our efforts towards achieving all the MDGs worldwide, we have started the process of defining the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. My delegation greatly appreciates the steps undertaken by the Secretary-General in this regard. We fully share the view that the report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons greatly contributes to the ongoing process of consultations at various levels.

We believe that green and sustainable economic development should be adequately reflected in the post-2015 development agenda in order to address the widely shared need to work towards one unified global development agenda with sustainable development at its centre.

Like many others, Mongolia is extremely vulnerable to climate change. The country faces serious environmental problems such as desertification, pasture degradation, natural disasters, droughts, water- and forest-resource depletion and air and soil pollution. These issues have a negative impact on the livelihood, health and well-being of the nomadic herders and ordinary Mongolians.

Increasing consumption, economic growth and the rapid growth of the mining sector are obviously intensifying the pressure on nature and the environment. Both sound policies and joint efforts are essential to solve this challenge. Continuing efforts are being made to address the environmental challenges by establishing and expanding the necessary legal frameworks, organizing various meetings, holding round-table discussions and implementing national programmes and projects. In 2011, the Parliament of Mongolia adopted a law on reducing air pollution in the capital city.

Following the Parliament's adoption of a package of laws on environmental protection at its 2012 spring session, today 70 per cent of the country's territory comes under the special protection of the State. More than 25 national programmes on nature and environment-related issues are being implemented in Mongolia.

In 2010, the Government started the implementation of national programmes on water protection and combating desertification. In 2011, the Parliament adopted a national programme on climate change. Nevertheless, more effort will be required in the years to come. Mongolia fully endorses the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and will be working towards their implementation. One of the key messages that was submitted to the Conference was the need for an integrated approach to water-resource management. That message remains relevant and must be central in strategies towards a green economy. It was also stated that a regular reporting mechanism should be established for water-resource management that would assist progress and share information.

In line with that thinking, we could look at the possibility of elaborating a United Nations convention on water-resource management. That idea was expressed by the President of Mongolia during the proceedings of World Environment Day that our country hosted this year. I hope that it will be given due consideration as we continue activities to observe this year as the International Year of Water Cooperation.

The Secretary-General's report testifies to the fact that today the role of United Nations peacekeeping is growing rapidly. Mongolia has pursued an active policy in this regard, making its contribution to promoting the noble goals of the United Nations Charter. During the past decade more than 5,000 peacekeepers from Mongolia have served in different peacekeeping operations, including the one in South Sudan. As a follow-up to the visit of our President to South Sudan earlier this year, we are focusing our attention on issues of improving and strengthening our involvement in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Today more than ever, we need concerted action to further strengthen international peace and security and to further promote our efforts on disarmament — nuclear disarmament in particular. I should like to highlight in this respect the importance of last month's High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, which has given great impetus to global endeavours to eliminate those weapons of mass destruction. We hope that the Nuclear Security Summit to be held early next year in the Netherlands will also further facilitate global efforts aimed at nuclear safety and security. My delegation is of the view that nuclear-weapon-free zones greatly contribute to hastening global and regional peace and security. To address other goals of nuclear disarmament, we encourage the establishment of new zones in other regions, including the Middle East.

As a North Asian country we are keenly interested in strengthening peace and stability in this region. We believe that Mongolia's proposal to start the Ulaanbaatar dialogue on security in North-East Asia would contribute to achieving this noble goal, and I wish to appeal to other countries of the region to consider that proposal favourably.

Recent days have been full of important meetings and events at the United Nations. I should like to draw attention to the fact that, during this year's treaty event, Mongolia signed two important agreements, one of which was the Arms Trade Treaty — a historic achievement of the United Nations in recent years in the field of disarmament. In this way, we are trying to make our modest contribution to achieving our common goals.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my delegation's strong resolve to work together with other Member States towards strengthening the United Nations system, so that it remains an effective centre for advancing the development agenda, a valuable tool for maintaining peace and stability throughout the world.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the report submitted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the work of the United Nations (A/68/1). At present, with the international situation undergoing profound and complex changes, peace and development remain the theme of our time. In a multipolar world, economic globalization and the emergence of the information society are profoundly transforming the world. Nations are more closely interconnected. Meanwhile, the international community is faced with a multitude of challenges. The underlying consequences caused by the international financial crisis remain to be eliminated. The instability and uncertainty of the world economic situation are still remarkable. The full recovery of the international economy and its healthy growth still face grave challenges.

The international security situation is complex and complicated. General hotspots flare up from time to time. International terrorism, cybersecurity and various traditional and non-traditional security threats are interlinked. We still have a long way to go before we can maintain international peace and security.

Over the past year, faced with a multitude of complex threats and challenges, the United Nations has been working actively to promote multilateral cooperation, with an emphasis on activities within its strategic frameworks; has placed economic growth and sustainable development at its core; and has played an important role in the fields of promoting sustainable development, maintaining international peace and security, promoting African development, protecting human rights, coordinating humanitarian assistance, combating terrorism, and promoting disarmament and non-proliferation.

The United Nations Secretariat has also made positive progress in improving its transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. The Chinese delegation appreciates the hard work carried out by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Secretariat. To respond effectively to the multitude of security challenges and threats, nations must work together to give a full and important role to the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations are the bedrock of contemporary international relations and constitute a guarantee for international peace. The international community should continue to adhere to the important principles of rejecting interference in the internal affairs of a nation, maintaining peace, opposing power politics and aggression, and promoting equality.

The question of Syria is the focus of the international community's attention. In that connection, China welcomes the decision adopted by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). China is ready to send experts to take part in the relevant work and to provide support.

A political solution is the only way out on the question of Syria, and such a solution should proceed hand in hand with the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. China calls upon the Syrian parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire and the cessation of violence, and join the process for a political settlement of the question. China hopes that the international community will build a consensus and promote the early convening of the second Geneva international conference, so as to end the crisis and start reconstruction through dialogue. We will continue to support Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi in their good offices. China is ready to join all other nations in a tireless effort to achieve a comprehensive, proper and long-term settlement.

Cooperation for international development is at a critical transitional stage. The United Nations should continue to play a leading role in development. China supports the continued implementation of all of the Millennium Development Goals and the early start of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, with emphasis on the difficulties and challenges faced by developing countries, in particular by African countries, least developed countries and small island developing countries, so as to narrow the gap and rectify the imbalance between North and South.

The post-2015 development agenda should continue to take development as its theme and place the elimination of poverty and the promotion of development at its heart, taking into full consideration the particular situation of nations and their different stages of development, and should respect the path of development chosen by each nation independently. That agenda should contribute to the strengthening of international partnerships for development, adhere to the principles of common but differentiated responsibility and fairness, increase capacity and development financing, promote the liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment, and expand official development assistance and technical support for developing countries, so as to create an enabling environment for the development of developing countries and provide a framework for international development cooperation conducive to developing countries.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The United Nations is an irreplaceable platform for maintaining peace, pursuing common development, increasing cooperation and creating win-win situations. It is also a community of nations that believe in solidarity and common progress. Faced with the challenges of globalization and the changing world situation, the international community has greater expectations of the United Nations. China will firmly promote the continued improvement of global governance and support the United Nations in its efforts to keep abreast of our times, respond actively to what is expected of the Organization and better carry out the functions given to it by the Charter.

United Nations reform should contribute to increasing the voice of developing countries in international affairs and to a bigger role for the United Nations in coordinating the efforts of nations to deal with global threats and challenges. The reform should progress in a balanced manner in the fields of security, development and human rights, and should contribute in particular to positive results in the field of development.

China has always advocated, supported and practised multilateralism. China has supported granting the United Nations a bigger role in international affairs and firmly upholds the status and authority of the United Nations. China will continue firmly to support the purposes and principles of the United Nations and is ready to deepen cooperation with the Organization. It will play an even more active part in the work of the various United Nations bodies and will promote the United Nations, giving more attention to the interests of developing countries in order to make a greater contribution to building lasting peace, common prosperity, and global harmony.

Mr. Umemoto (Japan): First of all, I should like to begin by congratulating His Excellency Mr. John Ashe on his assumption of his duties as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. Japan looks forward to his leadership during the current session in facing the global challenges that the General Assembly is mandated to discuss, as outlined in the Charter, and reaffirms its commitment to contribute to his work. I should further like to convey to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon the deep appreciation of Japan for his efforts in guiding the diverse activities of the United Nations and for his latest report on the work of the Organization (A/68/1).

The peaceful settlement of international disputes is a fundamental principle of the international community enshrined in the United Nations Charter. My Government is firmly committed to contribute to establishing the rule of law at the international level through, inter alia, its support to international courts and tribunals, as well as at the national level through its assistance aimed at strengthening domestic legal systems and human resources in developing countries. Furthermore, it is our strong belief that the idea of the rule of law is strongly connected with the enhancement of human rights, which is one of the three pillars of the United Nations. Japan will continue actively to contribute to international efforts under the auspices of the United Nations.

Japan strongly condemns the grave violations of human rights in places like Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We support the efforts of the United Nations in that connection, which include the decision of the Human Rights Council to extend the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria. Japan strongly welcomed the Council's adoption by consensus of the resolution on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and supports the activities of the Commission. Japan cooperated fully with the Commission when its members visited Japan in August as part of the investigation.

Japan, along with the European Union, will again submit a draft resolution on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in order to address the international community's grave concern, including with regard to the abductions issue.

As Prime Minister Abe stated in his statement from this rostrum during the general debate of the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.12), Japan has recently chosen a policy promoting a proactive contribution to peace, which is based on the undeniable record and solid appraisal of our country, which has endeavoured to bring peace and prosperity to the world and emphasizes cooperation with the international community.

The world's balance of power has been changing rapidly, and new types of threats have arisen because of technological innovations. It is now impossible for any one country, no matter which, to safeguard its own peace and security acting entirely by itself. Japan will work to garner the trust of the world as a creator of added value and a net contributor to regional and world peace and stability.

Given those circumstances, the role of the United Nations will become even more important. The maintenance of international peace and security is one of the primary tasks of the United Nations. In that regard, Japan is fully committed to contributing to United Nations efforts by participating in United Nations peacekeeping operation missions and extending assistance to affected areas.

Japan is currently sending an engineering unit of approximately 330 people to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan. Japan is also deploying two Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force destroyers and two P-3C maritime patrol aircraft in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia as part of international efforts to combat piracy.

Japan welcomes the work undertaken by the United Nations in the field of peacebuilding through the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. We believe stronger emphasis must be placed on the linkages between peacekeeping and development operations. Japan remains committed to ensuring that peacebuilding dividends are felt on the ground through the work of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

To that end, Japan stresses the importance of further improving coordination between the relevant organizations and the donors. In addition, we also welcome the initiative by the Secretary-General to strengthen civilian capacities in post-conflict States, including through the launching of the CAPMATCH capacity-matching programme last year, in which Japan takes part.

Turning to the situation in Syria, Japan profoundly deplores the deaths of more than 100,000 innocent people. Faced with the scourge of that war, the international community urgently needs to address the appalling humanitarian conditions there. Japan will continue proactively to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and to neighbouring countries, now totalling approximately $280 million, which includes the additional $60 million pledged by Prime Minister Abe during the general debate,.

Chemical weapons must never be used again. Japan strongly urges the Government of Syria to comply faithfully and fully with the chemical-weapons elimination programme established under Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Japan will provide extensive support and the greatest possible cooperation towards the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons.

Now is the time for the international community to seize this window of opportunity with a view to bringing about a political solution. The successful convening of the so-called Geneva II conference is of the utmost importance in that regard. I should like to reiterate Japan's commitment to working together with the international community towards an early Syrian-led political transition.

The special event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), held two weeks ago, was a great opportunity to renew our political commitment to the achievement of the MDGs and to lay out a clear work plan so as organically to integrate various related processes with a view to working towards a single framework and set of goals.

On the post-2015 development agenda, it is essential that human security be made its guiding principle. In that connection, let me stress two points: universal health coverage and disaster risk reduction. First, we should aim at satisfying broader health and medical needs based on a people-centred approach that seeks to attain universal health coverage and supplement a disease-centred approach. Measures for vulnerable people, women in particular, are the key to realizing universal health coverage. We will contribute to programmes related to universal health coverage through a multilateral approach.

Secondly, disaster risk reduction should be mainstreamed in the post-2015 development agenda, since a disaster can wipe out the hard-won achievements of years of development efforts in an instant. Having experienced numerous massive disasters, including the great East Japan earthquake and tsunami of 2011, we would like to share with the world our experiences and lessons learned, as well as various new disaster reduction technologies and systems. With that in mind, we will host the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in the city of Sendai, the disaster-stricken area of the great East Japan earthquake and tsunami, in March 2015. I should like to ask all Members here for their cooperation in regard to that Conference.

In September last year, the General Assembly adopted resolution 66/290, on the common understanding of the notion of human security. That was an important milestone for addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of people. In recognizing that development, human rights, and peace and security — the three pillars of the United Nations — are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, Japan is determined to make further efforts to mainstream the concept of human security and build on actions to implement that principle.

During the general debate in September, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared his intention to create a society in which women shine. Women, peace and security forms one of three policy priorities of the Japanese Government. Japan is determined to redouble its efforts to promote the participation of women at all stages, including the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding, as well as to safeguard the rights and physical well-being of women who are exposed to danger in times of conflict. In that regard, we will also further strengthen our support for the activities of UN-Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The threat posed by weapons of mass destruction continues to be one of the most imminent issues that the United Nations and its Member States need to address. Japan has been playing a leading role in promoting the adoption of General Assembly resolutions that call for united action to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. In that connection, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's continued development of its nuclear and missile programmes is a serious threat to the region and to the entire international community. Japan strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete steps towards denuclearization and to fully comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and its commitments under the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks in 2005.

With regard to Iran, Japan continues to cooperate with the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1737 (2006). Japan strongly believes that the full implementation of the related Security Council resolutions is of critical importance, as it provides a solid basis for the United Nations to promote international peace and stability.

The establishment of the highest common standards for regulating the international trade in conventional arms had been eagerly anticipated. As one of the original seven co-authors of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Japan did its utmost to finalize that work, which culminated in the adoption of the ATT during the sixty-seventh session. Japan strongly urges Member States to sign and ratify that Treaty at the earliest possible opportunity, so that the ATT will come into effect as soon as possible.

It was regrettable that the Security Council failed to unite and act as one, before the recent adoption of Council resolution 2118 (2013), concerning the grave situation in Syria. The malfunctioning of the Security Council reminds us that reform of the Council is long overdue and is one of the most urgent tasks to which Member States should give priority. Based on that belief, the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Four met in the margins of the opening of the current session of the General Assembly. The Ministers reconfirmed their common vision for reform and stressed the need to intensify efforts to translate into concrete outcomes, at the latest by 2015, the commitment by the leaders at the 2005 World Summit to work for an early reform of the Security Council. In that context, Japan appreciates the emphasis Ambassador Ashe put on the matter in his inaugural address. Japan also welcomes the invaluable efforts made by the Chairman of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, and supports his proposal of a concise working document.

Regarding administrative and budgetary issues, the Assembly will be dealing with the budget for 2012-2013, as well as the 2014-2015 budget proposal. In order to ensure budgetary discipline, Japan will carefully analyse and judge the appropriateness and affordability of all potential additional items in the current budget, as well as the proposed programme budget 2014-2015.

With regard to human resources management, including the proposed mobility framework and the common system, those items have a great impact on the future of the Organization, and Japan will actively and positively participate in the related negotiations. Japan expresses its appreciation of the Secretary-General's continued strong commitment to better management of the Secretariat and United Nations facilities.

I will close my statement today by reiterating Japan's intention to work closely with the Secretary-General in ensuring a more effective and efficient United Nations.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): At the outset, I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/68/1). The report, which covers a wide range of issues, testifies to the centrality and importance of the United Nations in addressing the myriad of challenges that beset the international community. The challenges are interconnected. While we try to isolate them in order to conjure up specific remedies, we must keep in mind that they are interconnected in so many ways. Malaysia associates itself with the statement made by Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Allow me also to present some of Malaysia's views regarding a few of the key issues highlighted in the Secretary-General's report.

As the 2015 deadline looms, Malaysia, together with the rest of the international community, is making the final push towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We wholeheartedly agree with the Secretary-General that 2015 is not the finish line in our quest to ensure balanced and inclusive global development. Rather, we will begin another chapter as we continue on our journey to build upon the successes of the MDGs and fill in the gaps where we have fallen short.

Malaysia is fully supportive of the theme of this year's session, "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage", which is both apt and timely. We trust that the theme will provoke serious discussion on the path forward towards international development.

In Rio de Janeiro last year, the global community reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable development and adopted a comprehensive framework for action. With almost one billion people still living in extreme poverty and with income inequality rising, sustainable development will need to be inclusive and take special care of the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. The support expressed by all Member States in coming up with a comprehensive post-2015 development agenda has been overwhelming. Member States should build on that momentum and find the best possible development framework for every one of us.

Malaysia is following closely the progress of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals as mandated by the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex). In formulating the sustainable development goals (SDGs), we should keep in mind the interests of developing countries, especially the least developed countries. It is not intended that the developing countries should undertake the SDGs as a kind of conditionality or a set of new obligations that apply only to them. The goals should be universally applicable to all countries, including developed ones. Hence, the principle of common but differentiated responsibility enshrined in the Rio principles must be applied in a holistic way when formulating the goals. We should also ensure that the SDG process is coherent with the post-2015 United Nations development agenda process. The design, structure and choice of SDGs should go in tandem with what developing countries aspire to achieve and should be supported by our partners in the developed countries through the provision of technology and finance.

We wish to emphasize that the SDGs should not in any way undermine the achievements of the MDGs by 2015. We believe that MDGs and SDGs are not competing concepts. The SDGs, if correctly formulated, would accelerate the continuation of work begun under the banner of the MDGs. They should strive for greater economic and social inclusion and emphasize integration and balance among economic, social and environmental aspirations. There should be, therefore, a unified, people-centred development with sustainable development at its core and under the umbrella of world peace.

Economic growth and social development can only flourish under conditions of peace, security and stability. Unfortunately, the international community continues to witness the devastating effects of conflict and instability on the civilian populations of various countries, including Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the occupied Palestinian territory. We must strive harder to find concrete solutions to end violent conflicts and create the right environment for nation-building and peacebuilding initiatives.

Malaysia reiterates its call for a Syrian-led inclusive political process to resolve the situation in Syria. We are against unilateral action to resolve the conflict, and we support resolute efforts through transparent dialogue and mutual cooperation. We join our voices to those of the international community in condemning without reservation the use of chemical weapons and call on all stakeholders to intensify their efforts to explore all possible diplomatic options for peace under the auspices of the United Nations.

Malaysia regrets that another year has passed without any resolution for the people of the occupied Palestinian territory. Day after day, month after month, year after year, the people of Palestine continue to see their lands seized to make way for illegal settlements. They continue to see their families, including their children, displaced and forced from their homes. The plight of the people of Palestine must remain a top priority, and we fervently hope that the recent resumption of direct talks heralds progress towards a viable Palestinian State based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We express our strong support for international mediation efforts in bringing about a just, lasting and peaceful solution between disputing parties. Malaysia is a firm believer in resolving conflicts through peaceful means and has played a lead mediating role in resolving conflicts and disputes peacefully in our region.

In that connection, Malaysia believes that the principle of moderation is an important approach that can be applied in mediation. The application of moderation can contribute towards bridging differences, facilitating dialogues and resolving disputes, as well as towards sustainable development and stability. Moderation can also create harmonious relations by calling for mutual respect, tolerance, understanding, dialogue, compromise and justice. We believe, therefore, that moderation can be a valuable tool in conflict resolution, national reconciliation, peacebuilding and power-sharing arrangements.

Malaysia is also committed to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission as a member of its Organizational Committee. We fully support United Nations efforts to pool all available and relevant resources with a view to assisting countries in their post-conflict peacebuilding, recovery, reconstruction and, eventually, development. To that end Malaysia stands ready to provide capacity-building assistance, such as through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme, under which we have trained more than 4,000 participants from 14 post-conflict countries to date.

Malaysia continues to support the strengthening of economic development and political governance in Africa. We commend the efforts made by the New Partnership for Africa's Development and its partners, including the United Nations, in guiding the socioeconomic transformation of the region. Malaysia will continue actively to engage and explore potential partnerships in the African region in forums such as the Langkawi International Dialogue and the Global Smart Partnership Dialogue. Malaysia also has strong trade, investment and capacity-building links with the African continent and looks forward to enhancing those ties further in the years to come.

As long as nuclear weapons remain in existence, our collective safety and well-being hangs in the balance. I reiterate the call made by our Prime Minister here on 26 September 2013 for a nuclear-weapon-free world during the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament.

As pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General, it is ironic that an issue as prominent and critical as nuclear disarmament remains at an impasse in international negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. The paralysis must be brought to an end, and we reiterate the proposals made by our Prime Minister for new perspectives to be taken into account in the disarmament discourse, including the views of academicians, intellectuals, think tanks and non-governmental organizations.

Malaysia views the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as a significant milestone in international efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms. The Prime Minister of Malaysia signed the Treaty on 26 September 2013, cementing our commitment to binding international standards that would contribute to reducing armed conflict and the misuse of arms. We call upon Member States to accede to and ratify the ATT in order rapidly to bring the Treaty into force.

Malaysia is encouraged by the Secretary-General's continued commitment to ensuring that the United Nations is able to deliver in spite of scarce resources. We agree that staff members are assets and that their development would undeniably assist in preparing the Organization to face the evolving challenges with which we are confronted in this day and age. Enterprise risk management, enterprise resource planning, also known as Umoja, and International Public Sector Accounting Standards are not mere words or abbreviations for us to remember. They are important administrative and management projects that will enhance the management and efficiency of the Organization as a whole.

My delegation acknowledges that there are limited human, financial and material resources available to the Organization because of the world economic situation. Given those limitations and the ever-increasing mandate given to the United Nations, Member States will continue to demand greater transparency and accountability. In that connection, Malaysia would like to see the completion of the capital master plan both on time and within budget. That is important, as the capital master plan will enhance the coordination and effectiveness of the United Nations through modernization in communications and improvements in the working environment for staff members.

To conclude, it is true that much has changed since the United Nations was conceived. Despite the changes and problems that we face, Malaysia remains a firm believer in multilateralism and consistently subscribes to the centrality of the United Nations, which has enabled the evolution of rule-based interaction among States, thus creating a predictable and stable international order. We sincerely hope that this session of the General Assembly will allow all of us to move forward in a concerted effort to address the various problems and challenges that are laid upon us. The Assembly can count on Malaysia's firm commitment in that regard.

Mr. Estreme (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Argentina would like to thank the Secretary-General for the submission of his report on the work of the Organization (A/68/1). I should like to focus my statement on three matters to which the Secretary-General has devoted a major part of his report: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 agenda, Syria, and particular developments regarding peacekeeping operations.

Argentina takes a positive view of the Millennium Development Goals as a tool for organizing and promoting national public policy that brings together efforts to pursue specific, clear and concrete ends. National Governments have been the major protagonists in that progress, with the collaboration of the United Nations system and with the input, although not always sufficient, provided by international cooperation.

The current debate on the post-2015 agenda is very timely, since an international and multisectoral dialogue has been triggered on various aspects that will, no doubt, feed into the decisions to be taken in 2014-2015. But that process should not distract our attention from the pressing work that we must still complete in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals before the 2015 deadline. Many countries are on course to achieve them, but when we are talking about development and human rights, the task is unending and that we must sustain our efforts over time.

Argentina has shown that with clear ambition and strategies and inclusive development, major changes can become reality. Eradicating poverty is, and must continue to be, our central objective, and we cannot accept any pretext to avoid adopting that as the main objective for 2030. The level of poverty in Argentina declined by 87 per cent between 2003 and 2013, today standing at 5.4 per cent. The time to permanently eradicate extreme poverty is now. That will not be possible unless we reverse the current trend towards increasing inequality in the world. Deep asymmetries continue to exist between the developed and developing countries, asymmetries that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has described as structural gaps that are linked to inequality.

We do not believe that there is a single pattern for development, either our own or for other people. We cannot ignore the differences in the responsibilities of the various countries to work to achieve sustainable development. Each country's economic, social and environmental obligations at the global level should be seen as consistent with its level of development, its specific circumstances, and its different historical responsibilities towards the degradation of the environment, which means that we must clearly respect the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

Each individual State should therefore work in a systematic fashion to promote development, beginning by ensuring consistency between its macroeconomic policies and its policies relating to the generation of decent work and social inclusion. The access of developing countries to genuine funding resources, including official development assistance, varies. They may be able to obtain increased funding from multilateral and regional development banks or to improve their access to markets for exports through agreements reached at the next Bali round, particularly in terms of agricultural products. They also differ in their ability to promote the development of human resources and adapt to climate change.

The commitments entered into should be broken down into specific aims and objectives for all, and not just for the developing countries. The implementation of Millennium Development Goal 8, which reflects the commitment of the international community to supporting the development agenda, has not lived up to expectations and that is, perhaps, due to the fact that it was not clearly defined with clear and qualitative goals to be reached. That is a lesson we must bear in mind when we formulate the new post-2015 development agenda.

The States Members of the United Nations must step up to the challenges that we have to tackle. We must get to the substance of the discussion — how to maintain and consolidate progress made through the MDGs; how to strengthen and complement them for the new sustainable development agenda, not forgetting that the task is to obtain results and not just to quantify them; and how to fund the new agenda and ensure that each individual State, whatever its development status, can take ownership of the agenda by adopting realistic achievable objectives.

Moving on to the Syrian crisis, the Secretary-General's report has revealed the shortcomings of the collective security system laid down in the United Nations Charter and has placed in jeopardy the very credibility of the Organization. Specifically, a divided Security Council has failed in its obligation to comply with the mandate conferred on it by the Charter. A few days ago, the President of Argentina raised that matter, placing it in the broader context of the need to reform the Security Council by removing the right of veto. She said:

> "When dealing with conflict resolution and management, if one party to the conflict, or an interested party, has the right of veto, that right necessarily becomes an obstacle to the resolution of the conflict." (*A/68/PV.7, p. 10*)

The Organization has recently made tremendous efforts to deal with the humanitarian fallout of the Syrian conflict and the fallout in neighbouring countries. But it is clear that no amount of assistance will satisfy the growing needs of the people of Syria unless a negotiated outcome to the crisis is found. We therefore agree with those who believe that the recent unity of the Council in dealing with the matter of chemical weapons and in addressing the humanitarian situation may constitute the foundation for a political and negotiated solution for the crisis in Syria that recognizes the legitimate aspirations and demands of the Syrian people and lays the foundation for lasting peace through the early holding of a conference on Syria to implement the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 (S/2012/523, annex).

Of course, war crimes, crimes against humanity and grave violations of human rights cannot go unpunished. The International Criminal Court has a role to play there. We must again stress, as we have done frequently, that the delivery of arms to the parties in the conflict must cease.

To conclude, I should like to talk about certain developments that have occurred over the past year with regard to peacekeeping operations. As a member of the Security Council, Argentina voted in favour of resolution 2098 (2013) regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo, based on the concern generated within the international community by the continuing deterioration of the situation in that country and the need to ensure the protection of human rights and international humanitarian law and the rule of law, and the end of impunity, particularly in the eastern area of the country.

Argentina voted in favour of the resolution, but subsequently expressed its concern regarding the establishment of the Force Intervention Brigade, and particularly its ability to use force in offensive action, even when such a decision, enabled under paragraph 9 of the resolution, was considered to be of an exceptional nature and would not constitute a precedent. My country believes that such a use of force would represent a conceptual change in the traditional concept of peacekeeping operations.

In that regard, with respect to including the dimension of the imposition of peace within the concept of peacekeeping, even when justified by the circumstances, there should have been further broader consultations with all countries that contribute troops to the United Nations, not only with countries contributing troops to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That should be done bearing in mind the new tasks that might have to be undertaken and the impact that such a decision might have on the entire peacekeeping system. The principles of neutrality and impartiality inherent in peacekeeping missions are at stake here. My country supports the peaceful settlement of disputes consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and other bodies.

Again, I should like to restate Argentina's readiness to contribute and continue to work with the Secretary-General in order to achieve a United Nations that is more efficient and better adapted to the new international realities.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): We read very attentively the Secretary-General's annual report on the work of the Organization (A/68/1). Structurally, the report is organized around the three major priorities defined by the General Assembly in the strategic framework for the biennium. Substantively, it provides copious information regarding what has been accomplished in the 12 months under review. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for all of that information, which clearly demonstrates the efforts that he and his staff have made in discharging the weighty and delicate tasks given to them by the Member States.

We join the Secretary-General in expressing our emotional condolences to the families of the officials of the Organization who have lost their lives serving humankind and the noble ideals and principles in the Charter.

Regarding questions of international peace and security, the report summarizes the activities carried out by the Organization in maintaining and building peace, in conflict prevention, and in mediation in a number of parts of the world. We agree with the Secretary-General that prevention, peacebuilding and mediation are the best ways to prevent conflict situations from degenerating or becoming seriously bogged down. In Africa particularly, we support the Secretary-General in the efforts to resolve existing crises on our continent, but especially to build African capacities for peacekeeping on the continent and subregionally.

The Central African Republic merits priority attention on political questions. The report describes the assistance given to 55 Member States in building democracy and holding elections. We commend the Secretary-General for that assistance, particularly to African countries. On 30 September, Cameroon organized municipal and legislative elections in a climate of peace and calm, which was welcomed by national and international observers, a sign of the significant progress in and maturity of our electoral process, patiently established and constantly being refined by our Government with the assistance of bilateral and multilateral partners, including the United Nations.

With respect to promoting sustained economic growth and sustainable development, the report mentions the actions carried out by the United Nations to accelerate the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and to promote the post-2015 development agenda, as well as the well-being of all throughout the world.

We also agree with the Secretary-General that climate change is a major issue in our age and that the time to act is now. The recurrence of natural disasters throughout the world, with Hurricane Sandy as an overwhelming and devastating example, striking even the United Nations basement, should prompt us to make good decisions before it is too late, at any rate before we have to pay an even heavier price, materially, financially and in terms of human lives.

The contribution of countries such as Cameroon to sustainable socioeconomic progress throughout the world resides, among other things, in an environmentally rational management of our forest area of 21 million hectares in the greater Congo basin, which is the second largest after the Amazon and a large reservoir for the retention of carbon and other greenhouse gases. It is an oxygenic lung aerating the world, home to rare tree species, rare and diverse flora and fauna, and a biodiversity that has multiple uses. If all of that wealth is going to be global, a partnership must allow those who have such things to enjoy them in a legitimate manner, to obtain a fair price for them, and to provide oversight, maintenance, conservation and regeneration.

Regarding development in Africa, which is a definite priority that is always underscored by the General Assembly, the report highlights the actions undertaken by the United Nations, in close cooperation with the African Union, for the development of Africa through its support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development. There is no need to reiterate that our continent has in the past few years reaffirmed its leadership in defining the future and the role that it wishes to have in the short, medium and long term in the comity of nations and throughout the world.

Programmes and projects have been developed for that purpose on the continent, subregionally and nationally, with follow-up measures, partnerships and strategic assistance partnerships. We have requested such projects, and we support the concrete measures proposed in paragraph 44 of the report, which states that everything has been done to ensure that the needs and priorities of Africa are given full attention as we think about the post-2015 development agenda.

The monitoring mechanism mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/293 will allow us to summarize the implementation of the commitments made for development in Africa. Resources for support are, of course, expected along those lines.

On the promotion and protection of human rights, the report describes the actions taken and the progress made and notes the shortcomings and disappointing results in some cases. In an area so expansive and diverse as human rights, we need to emphasize the need for firm will on the part of States to move ahead in that area. Cameroon is deeply committed in that respect, as can be seen by the progress made by our Government on the ground with respect to political, economic and social rights in developing appropriate legislation for children, women, the family, older persons and persons with disabilities, in our participation in international treaties and conventions and in presenting national reports in those areas and following up on recommendations made by the competent national and international bodies.

With respect to humanitarian assistance, the report provides detailed information on the total contributions received and their recipients. We commend the Secretary-General for the efforts made, and we would encourage him to move ahead, ensuring good coordination, speed and greater security for humanitarian assistance operations.

With respect to the promotion of justice and international law, the report notes a number of activities concerning the International Criminal Court, as well as specific international courts. The Secretary-General should have included in that paragraph of the report information regarding the dissemination and teaching of international law in a number of regions of the world.

On disarmament, the Secretary-General expresses, among other things and quite rightly, strong concern regarding the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Cameroon is a party to the ban on such weapons and can only say that they should not be used. We worked for the recent adoption in The Hague of a resolution on that question, which was then amplified by the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2118 (2013), paving the way for the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons. Beyond the destruction of those weapons, Cameroon supports the ongoing Russian-American initiatives aimed at finding a peaceful political solution to the entire Syrian crisis. Our peace-loving country is working for an Africa and a world that does not have chemical weapons.

On drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, Cameroon notes with appreciation the actions undertaken by the United Nations, as stated in the report. I should like to emphasize that acts of piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea were the subject of a summit of West African countries held in Cameroon in April. That meeting enabled us to adopt unanimous measures to combat such acts vigorously. In fact, an interregional clearing house headquartered in Yaoundé was established. The United Nations and other bilateral and multilateral partners are called upon to provide assistance to the centre as needed. The partnership that the Secretary-General wholeheartedly seeks could find fertile ground for cooperation in the interregional centre.

Finally, on the strengthening of the Organization, the report emphasizes the measures taken by the Secretary-General to increase the effectiveness of the management of the United Nations. We need not reiterate that the Organization is the body that regulates our higher common interests, including peace, security, and the well-being of one and all as the most critical elements. The Organization tajes an integrated approach to management through its key instruments, including the strategic framework, the programme budget and oversight, and the inspection, investigation and assessment mechanisms.

The Organization's staff, as the Secretary-General has affirmed, is its greatest asset. In the past few years, the stability and predictability of all those factors have been sorely tested, owing to global financial difficulties that have not spared the Organization. The Secretary-General has been constrained to do more with less. We hope that projects such as Umoja and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards norms mentioned by the Secretary-General will, in keeping with the time frame and goals set by the General Assembly, result in a long-lasting management culture, if the Organization is to survive in the information age of the twenty-first century, where it has to deal with actors that may be better equipped in those areas. Cameroon supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to modernize the Organization in the hope he will move forward in full consultation with and giving careful consideration to the views of all Member States.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): First of all, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I wish to extend sincere compliments to Ambassador John Ashe on assuming the presidency of the Assembly and to pledge our full support in the discharge of his important duties in that capacity. I look forward to celebrating his success, which will indeed be a common victory for us all.

I also wish to put on record our sincere thanks and compliments to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on his industrious and successful stewardship of our complex Organization.

Our Organization represents the soul of human conscience, a monument to the united determination to make our planet a better place by all means and standards, and a vehicle for translating into reality our collective resolve to that end. The Secretary-General symbolizes the pinnacle of integrity, dedication, competence, judgment and overall coordination and leadership in the functioning of the Organization. It is with this fact in mind that my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report, as contained in document A/68/1, as an excellent window into the progress of the Organization over the past year in all areas of its core functions.

The Secretary-General's comprehensive analysis outlining the complex context of peace, security and development needs, resource gaps and other parameters of peace in the contemporary world, and the conclusions drawn therefrom, are pertinent and urgent, together with the actions that Member States need to take in the course of next year and beyond. On the whole, the Secretary-General has highlighted major global issues with insightful suggestions and provided a good basis for constructive intergovernmental deliberations ahead. My delegation commends the report for its clear articulation of serious concern over such development issues as the Millennium Development goals (MDGs), the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals, and how the most needy and most vulnerable of countries can be taken on board in our future development efforts.

Nepal has unflinching faith in the principles and purposes of the United Nations, believes in the centrality of the Organization in all multilateral affairs, attaches great significance to each and every aspect of the work of the Organization, and takes seriously each and every point the Secretary-General makes in the report. In looking at what the Organization can accomplish directly and as a catalyst for peace, security, development and justice throughout the world, we believe the United Nations has no alternative except to ensure a more robust and reformed Organization, for which my delegation will be working closely with all in future.

Nepal has been contributing to the work of the Organization in different capacities, and most importantly in the United Nations peacekeeping efforts throughout the world, including in the most difficult of missions and at the shortest notice. I assure the Secretary-General of Nepal's continued commitment to participating in United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

Issues of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, including climate change and mountains, MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals, the development of the least developed and landlocked developing countries, international peace and security, human rights and humanitarian assistance, justice and the rule of law at the national and international levels, international cooperation to free the world from the arms race and weapons of mass destruction, drugs and terrorism are all very close to our heart. Nepal is supportive of the serious efforts being made to address the concerns and aspirations of small island developing States.

We are aware that no matter how we may wish to move ahead, we have to deal head on with the crucial issues of infrastructure development, capacity-building in terms both of hardware and software, resource mobilization, official development assistance, technology transfer, trade, foreign direct investment, sustainable agriculture, tourism, international migration and development, to which we must accord priority.

The MDGs have been the most successful development drive in the history of the United Nations. The drive has brought the United Nations closer to people in the countries of the South. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, our leaders agreed to build on the success of the MDGs and to develop universally applicable sustainable goals for the future.

As we embark on the post-2015 development agenda, now is the time to stand by that resolve in the firm determination that we will not betray the bottom billion people living in abject poverty on any other development pretext, and that we will place humanity at the centre of development. The exercise of the post-2015 development agenda should rise to the challenge of facilitating the transformational shifts that the world needs.

While my delegation understands full well the time constraints facing us and the Organization, I find it important to issue a word of caution regarding the use of time between now and 2015.

The Secretary-General has outlined a plan for holding big events in 2013, 2014 and 2015 as part of the post-2015 development agenda exercise. It is important to ponder how that planning relates to the necessary, relevant activities at national level. We have less than 100 weeks to deliberate on all aspects of the post-2015 development agenda and to agree on a post-2015 development framework by September 2015. If we cut out weekends and holidays, that period will be shorter by one-third. While the job has to be full-time, given its long-term pertinence and urgency, it will be one of several responsibilities for most of the people supposed to work on it.

The resulting danger is threefold. The exercise may not be able to be adequately informed of the voices of all; the agenda may not be able to encompass or avoid all that it should; and the specific aspects of the outcome of the whole exercise may not correspond to the specific needs on the ground. More importantly, there may be a disconnect between exercises at the global level and those at the national level. We have numerous examples of agreeing on time-bound programmes of action — say for five or 10 years — and spending the first half of that period figuring out how it can all be integrated into the national scheme of things for implementation and follow-up.

Any recurrence of the same experience in the case of the post-2015 development agenda would be most unfortunate. Parallel efforts to engage machineries and all stakeholders at the national level right from the planning phase is important to forge a sense of participation, partnership, ownership, attachment and commitment, which are all essential to ensuring that the intended results are achieved, achieved in full and achieved together.

I therefore humbly call on the presidency of the Assembly and the Secretary-General to schedule the meetings and activities carefully and judiciously, ensuring justice and balance among issues and countries, as well as across themes and regions. That will help to ensure that all efforts at the national and international levels will go in tandem right from the planning phase, together with crafting financing and other mechanisms, so that we will be able to deliver what may be agreed and to evaluate the results afterwards.

With that fervent call, I reiterate my delegation's admiration for the dedicated and dynamic leadership of the Secretary-General, and especially for his personal, empathetic hopes for uplifting the downtrodden and needy, and our full confidence in his work ahead. Nepal looks forward to working with all Members to make the Organization rise to the challenge posed by our world in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): We commend the Secretary-General for presenting a very comprehensive and substantive report on the work of the Organization (A/68/1). We all know that this past year the Secretary-General has worked hard to promote peace and security around the world, to shape our 2015 development agenda, to champion the cause of education for all, to mobilize the international community to deal with the challenges of climate change, and to muster support for sustainable energy for all. With the support of Member States, the Secretary-General and the Organization on his watch have made impressive progress. What is more, we all, because of our collective wisdom, seem to be moving in the right direction.

This past year, we also had the honour of receiving the Secretary-General in Pakistan, where he held an in-depth dialogue with our leadership and focused on issues of education, energy, disaster response and preparedness, counter-terrorism, and peace and security in the region. His visit to Pakistan was memorable because he celebrated our independence day with the people of Pakistan.

If we look at the state of the world, we see five broad trends. First, the world has still not fully recovered from the international financial crisis, and that has a direct impact on the United Nations development agenda. Secondly, the social and economic development agenda in many developing countries remains anaemic. It requires the convening power and support of the United Nations. Thirdly, climate change has become a serious challenge for our globe's increasingly fragile ecosystems. Fourthly, conflicts are raging throughout the world, most of which we cannot resolve without the intercession and intervention of the United Nations. Last but not least, terrorism and other forms of asymmetric threats destabilize societies and pit faith against faith, nation against nation, and civilization against civilization.

Not all is dark and dismal. There are many positive trends. The Millennium Development Goals have made progress, although we have to go some way to meet them 100 per cent and that is what we ought to be doing. The United Nations is now preparing for the post-2015 development agenda to evolve and implement a development framework that deals with social, economic and environmental challenges in a holistic and cohesive manner.

The sustainable development goals must set the goal of the eradication of poverty by 2030. At the same time, we have to find a balance between economy and ecology, and we have to ensure that developing countries attain higher levels of economic growth and development. Our efforts will flounder if we do not have a strategy for financing for development. We need both traditional and innovative means to bridge the resource gaps for our ambitious goals for sustainable development. Let us strive to succeed in all these goals.

The agenda of the Security Council is dominated by African issues. The Security Council, the African Union's Peace and Security Council, and Africa's subregional organizations have been succeeding in the recent past in resolving some of the most intractable issues in East, Central and Western Africa.

Daunting challenges remain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali. In this regard, we applaud the Secretary-General's leadership in crafting the Comprehensive Framework Agreement, with the help of the countries of the Great Lakes region and the Southern African Development Community, to bring peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is a work in progress.

We also support the Secretary-General's efforts to pursue a comprehensive strategy for addressing the problems of transnational crime, resource scarcity, terrorism and political instability in the Sahel.

We welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) to secure control of chemical weapons in Syria and destroy them. We hope that the consensus generated by the resolution will lead to agreements at the "Geneva II" conference so that Syria can move towards reconciliation and a transition acceptable to the Syrian people.

We hope that the resumed Middle East peace process will gain momentum and lead to lasting peace in the region and a viable Palestinian State.

For our part, we fully support the efforts to shape a post-2015 development agenda. Our new Government has taken steps to accelerate social and economic development, with a sharp focus on the revival of the economy, investment, trade promotion, energy, education, health, and disaster prevention. We are working proactively for peace and stability in the region. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met Mr. Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the General Assembly last month and made serious overtures to resolve all outstanding issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan supports Afghanistan's efforts to initiate a peace process and to move towards national reconciliation and stability. The international community should continue to help Afghanistan as it negotiates political, security and economic transitions. In the meantime, the United Nations should upgrade and fortify its strategy for the repatriation of the more than 3 million Afghan refugees still living in Pakistan.

The Secretary-General has expressed disappointment over the lack of progress on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. I would say that some headway has been made. The Arms Trade Treaty was adopted last year. The Nuclear Security Summit process is moving apace. A successful nuclear security conference was held by the International Atomic Energy Agency earlier this year, and a High-level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament was hosted by the General Assembly last month.

We believe that the impasse in the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda can be broken if we address four core issues — disarmament, the fissile material cut-off treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and negative security assurances — and pursue them simultaneously without establishing hierarchies. Similarly, barriers to access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes should be removed. We should adhere to the cardinal principles of security for all, non-selectivity and non-discrimination.

Our position on a fissile material cut-off treaty is determined by our national security interests and the objective of strategic stability in South Asia. We advocate a strategic restraint regime comprising nuclear and missile restraint, conventional balance and conflict resolution. Pakistan fully qualifies to have access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and to become a member of export control regimes, including the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Security Council reform needs to be pursued carefully and skilfully. This is a momentous process. Its results cannot be achieved through shortcuts or procedural moves and manoeuvres. Decisions in this regard must enjoy the support of all the Members of the Organization. The reform should aggregate and reflect the aspirations and interests of all, not the ambitions of a few. The Council's reform should make it more representative, democratic and equitable and its work more effective, transparent and accountable.

As the Prime Minister of Pakistan told the Assembly last month (see A/68/PV.15), we should plan for a dynamic future, and not entrench anachronistic, historical patterns and privileges. The Uniting for Consensus group recommends such a viable intermediate solution. Let us not forget that it is our collective responsibility to revitalize the Assembly so that it can play its rightful role for peace, stability, sustainable development and the promotion and protection of human rights. This is a new era. Let us not hark back but look forward.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate the President upon his election and commend the Secretary-General for his report on the different activities of the Organization (A/68/1).

Development is an important source of financing and support for many developing countries. In spite of the importance that we attach to other sources of financing, there is no substitute for public financing. We are concerned by what we read in the Secretary-General's report regarding a decline in official development assistance for the period 2011-2012. We hope that the developed countries will honour their commitments.

The Secretary-General's report does not take into account the concerns of the developing countries, in particular the implementation of the promises and commitments already made, in particular on how to implement the fact that developed countries provide financing, build capacity and transfer technologies to developing countries as part of international efforts to promote sustainable development because of their historic responsibility, climate change and environmental obstacles to development, and given their financial and technological resources, pursuant to principle 7 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, conerning common but differentiated responsibility. We welcome more vigorous United Nations efforts to assist African countries in development, in particular through the financing of peacebuilding programmes through the Peacebuilding Fund and through cooperation with regional and international financial institutions.

The situations in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic require peacebuilding in line with an comprehensive perspective that takes account of the specificities of each of the two countries rather than one model and lessons learned from the past and from experience with the six countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

With respect to peacebuilding under the Charter, Egypt welcomes the United Nations role in democratic transformation, including in Egypt in line with its national priorities. We express our concern regarding the treatment of the situation in Egypt in the report's chapter on international security and peacebuilding. Ours is an internal situation that does not threaten international peace and security. The Secretary-General has said that this is an Egyptian matter and that it is the responsibility of Egyptians to resolve this issue for a better future.

I reaffirm that the Government of Egypt is committed to implementing the road map within the agreed timelines, to holding presidential and parliamentary elections by the deadline of May 2014, and to repudiating terrorism and violence. We accept the principles of the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, equality and justice for all.

Regarding justice and international law, Egypt recognizes the importance of respecting the judgement of international law. We believe that peaceful means should be used to settle disputes pursuant to international law, including the International Court of Justice, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and international arbitration. We hope that the international humanitarian summit will be prepared with an agenda that will build national capacities in developing countries so that they will be able to deal with their crises and offer solutions that will promote sustainable development through their national institutions.

Although the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) and other resolutions of the General Assembly support the responsibility to protect, the definition of that principle is still subject to different interpretations among Member States out of fear that it will be used in a way that is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations. We therefore stress that there should be no politicization or pretext for interfering in the internal affairs of States.

Egypt welcomes ongoing social activities to promote women's rights, as highlighted in the report. We would have hoped that the report would have addressed last year's accomplishments, for example in preventing violence against women and violence during conflicts.

We thank the Secretary-General for his work with the Open-ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament, his efforts to promote a fissile material working group, and for his disarmament efforts. We thank him for stressing the humanitarian aspect of nuclear disarmament. He has stated that the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction had been welcomed, but has not named the State responsible for quashing it.

We draw attention to our interest in seeing the conference convened on basis of the most recent Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as noted by the Secretary-General and the three depositary countries. We reaffirm that the universalization of the NPT is the foundation of the international nuclear disarmament system.

We cannot equate nuclear disarmament with any other issue. The Secretary-General has commented on the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We affirm that countries producing, accumulating, benefiting from and exporting such weapons are the source of that proliferation. Egypt reaffirms that the Arms Trade Treaty must take into account the interests of exporting and importing countries and the right of States to self-defence and to export weapons within legal rules. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the position of the Organization in this area.

We welcome the progress made in administration in the areas of International Public Sector Accounting Standards, Umoja and human-resource management. We support the principle of mobility as long as financial resources are available. We do not want it to be promoted at the expense of the Organization's other priorities, such as development. Egypt is ready to open dialogue with the President and others for specific results at this session as as to move forward in our actions for peace, justice and development.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I have had a request from one delegation to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim In Kyong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I am speaking in exercise of the right of reply regarding the Japanese delegation's allegations concerning the abductions issue and the Korean nuclear issue.

First, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I fully reject the preposterous allegation of the Japanese delegation regarding the abductions issue. As we have made clear on several occasions, the issue of the abductions of Japanese was completely and cleanly resolved thanks to our sincere and genuine efforts to implement the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-Japan Pyongyang Declaration.

The continued attempts of the Japanese delegation to raise the already resolved abductions issue are part of their entire hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which has persisted for half a century and is aimed at hiding their past inhuman crimes against the Korean people. Japan should sincerely atone for its past crimes against humanity, as unanimously demanded by the international community, rather than play tricks with the abductions issue, which has already been resolved.

Secondly, on the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, we have already stated several times how the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula originated. The nuclear issue originated because of the United States and its hostility towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States has defined the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as an enemy and seeks to eliminate our political system.

My country possesses a nuclear deterrent not because of ambitions but because it had to counter the threat. It has already been reported that, at this very moment, a strike group made up of United States ships — including the large nuclear-powered carrier *USS* George Washington with at least 100 nuclear bombs aboard, many guided-missile destroyers, cruisers, submarines and escort warships — is engaging in a military exercise.

That is why, in exercise of the right of reply to the allegation of the Japanese delegation on the abductions issue and the nuclear issue, I once again reject all allegations made by Japan.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, as contained in document A/68/1?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 111.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations

A/68/PV.33

General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

33rd plenary meeting

Monday, 14 October 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe .... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 73, 74 and 130

Report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the eighteenth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal (A/68/270)

Report of the international Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the twentieth annual report of the International Tribunal (A/68/255)

International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the first annual report of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (A/68/219)

The President: I now give the floor to Judge Vagn Joensen, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Judge Joensen (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda): I would like to begin by extending my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. John W. Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda on his election as President of the Assembly. I wish you, Sir, a successful period in office.

This is the second time that I address the General Assembly in my capacity as President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). It remains an immense honour for me to have this opportunity to speak to the members of the General Assembly, and it is my pleasure to present to the Assembly the eighteenth annual report of the ICTR (A/68/270). I remain confident that there will be only two more annual reports delivered by the President of the ICTR after the present one, as we have once again continued to make significant progress towards the completion of our mandate and the transition to the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

During the reporting period, from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013, the Tribunal issued its last judgement concerning one person at the trial level. As expected, the notice of appeal from the final ICTR trial judgement, in the *Ngirabatware* case, has been filed with and will be handled by the Mechanism, making it the first appeal against a judgement in a case before the ICTR or the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia to be handled by the Mechanism. With this,

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the Tribunal has now completed its work at the trial level with respect to all of the 93 accused. That includes 55 first-instance judgements involving 75 accused, the transfer of the files of the three top-level fugitives to the Mechanism for trial, 10 referrals of accused in custody and fugitives to national jurisdictions, two withdrawn indictments and three indictees who died prior to or in the course of the trial.

I turn now to appeals. During the reporting period, the Appeals Chamber rendered judgements in the *Gatete*, *Mugenzi* and *Mugiraneza* cases, in line with projections. To date, the appellate proceedings have been concluded in respect of 46 persons, with the final six appeals, involving 15 persons, currently pending. The remaining appeals work is on schedule for completion before the end of 2014 with the exception of one case, *Butare*, which involves six accused and which will have its oral arguments in 2014, there remaining only the deliberations and the judgement drafting to be completed in 2015.

The Registrar and I continue to oversee the administrative functions of the Chambers' monitoring of the *Uwinkindi* trial in Rwanda and will do so until the end of 2013, in close coordination with the Mechanism.

During this reporting period, the Appeals Chamber also rendered a final decision upholding the Trial Chamber's referral of the *Munyagishari* case to Rwanda. All responsibilities for the monitoring of the *Munyagishari* case in Rwanda have already become the responsibility of the Mechanism, save for the fact that the ICTR is still providing interim monitors from the Registry, who are now working closely with the Mechanism staff as interim monitors while monitoring arrangements with an organization are finalized. The seamless transfer of the monitoring of referred cases is a prime example of the smooth transition under way.

In December 2012, the Security Council adopted resolution 2080 (2012), which extended the terms of the ICTR Appeals Chamber judges to enable them to complete their work. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude both to the Council for that decision and to the judges in the Appeals Chamber for continuing to work tirelessly to complete the Tribunal's work under extremely tight deadlines and making every effort to meet the completion dates set forth in resolution 1966 (2010) while ensuring that the rights of the accused are not compromised.

In that respect, the ICTR will sorely miss the knowledge and experience of Judge Andrésia Vaz of Senegal, who resigned from her position as appeals judge on 31 May 2013. At the time of her resignation, Judge Vaz was sitting on 10 appeals cases, and accordingly her departure put additional pressure on an already strained Appeals Chamber. In order to mitigate any detrimental effect on the completion of appeals work that would come with the loss of such an esteemed and hard-working judge, I requested that, in accordance with article 12 bis of the statute of the Tribunal, the Secretary-General appoint a replacement judge to serve the remainder of Judge Vaz's term. I am pleased to report that the Secretary-General has appointed Mr. Mandiaye Niang of Senegal as a permanent judge of the ICTR to replace Judge Vaz. That appointment is most welcome, and we are confident that Judge Niang's previous Tribunal experience will play a crucial role in his ability to contribute to the remaining appeals work without delay.

During the reporting period, the Secretary-General also took action to appoint a new Registrar of the ICTR, replacing Mr. Adama Dieng, who left the ICTR in 2012 to become the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the new Registrar of the ICTR, Mr. Bongani Majola, whose appointment took effect from 1 January 2013. I must praise Mr. Majola for the extreme dedication he has shown in his role of representing the Secretary-General at the Tribunal at this difficult time in our mandate, and I thank him for all the hard work that he has undertaken in the short time since he took office.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the Office of the Registrar, as well as to the Offices of the Mechanism President and Registrar, for the excellent cooperation that exists between our offices, which has led to the continued smooth transition of functions from the ICTR to the Mechanism.

I would next like to take this opportunity to commend the entire staff of the ICTR, as the significant progress we have made towards the completion of our mandate and transition to the Mechanism would not have been possible without their tireless efforts. I want also to thank in particular the Registry for the important achievements registered through its organization and oversight of the preparation of records for archiving and handover to the Mechanism. In that regard, I would like to inform the Assembly that last month the ICTR handed over to the Mechanism two temporary archives facilities, which represent another important step in the archives- and records-transfer process. I especially thank all of the archives staff from the Tribunals and the Mechanism and commend them for the tireless work they have carried out with distinction.

I must also take this opportunity to commend the ICTR and Mechanism Prosecutor, Mr. Hassan Bubacar Jallow, for the tremendous efforts his Office has made to complete the ongoing appeals, monitor the cases referred to national jurisdictions and facilitate the transfer of cases, archives and records to the Mechanism. The tracking, arrest and trial of the three top-level fugitives — Félicien Kabuga, Protais Mpiranya and Augustin Bizimana — remain at the core of the Prosecutor's work in his role in the Mechanism, along with his continued assistance to the Rwandan authorities in locating and apprehending the six fugitives whose cases have been referred to Rwanda for trial.

The Office of the Prosecutor has also made substantial progress in the preparation of the Prosecution's evidentiary holding and records for archiving pending transfer to the Mechanism during the reporting period. The transfer of the entirety of the archives of the Office of the Prosecutor is expected to be finished upon the completion of all appeals and related litigation before the Tribunal. The Office of the Prosecutor has also been exemplary in its work on a number of projects that will be important in shaping the legacy of the Tribunal. Finally, I would like to congratulate the Prosecutor on the special achievement award that the Office received in September from the International Association of Prosecutors for the significant and important work that the Prosecution has done in its fight against impunity and for taking the initiative to establish a manual of best practices on the tracking and arrest of fugitives from international criminal justice that can be used by national and international prosecutors around the world.

I now return to an important issue that the ICTR has continued to raise in both the General Assembly and the Security Council for some years: that of relocating acquitted persons and those released after serving their sentences in the United Republic of Tanzania. The Registrar and I continue to work closely, engaging in extensive diplomatic efforts towards relocation, but this issue continues to be a daunting challenge, as there have thus far been almost no positive developments, even following recent Security Council resolutions 2029 (2011), 2054 (2012) and 2080 (2012), in which the Council reiterates its call to Member States that are in a position to do so to cooperate with the Tribunal.

Towards that end, on 30 May 2013, the Tribunal submitted a strategic plan for the relocation of acquitted and released persons to the Security Council Informal Working Group on International Tribunals. The plan provides for an overall framework, in which sustainable efforts will be deployed by the Tribunal, and for strategic options to be implemented on an ongoing basis. The Registrar and I remain committed to undertaking all possible efforts to find a solution to this problem, and we remain deeply concerned about the consequences of failure. In that respect, we have both redoubled our efforts in the past months, and I hereby reiterate the urgent call for increased cooperation from Member States with respect to the Tribunal's efforts to relocate these persons.

The year 2014 will mark the passage of 20 years since the genocide in Rwanda and the subsequent creation of the Tribunal later that year. As we near that important milestone, it seems like an appropriate moment to consider again the impact that international judicial institutions have had, not only on the evolution of international criminal law but also on judicial progress in domestic jurisdictions. In fact, one of the more tangible impacts that the ICTR has had is evinced by the considerable steps taken by Rwanda to comply with international fair-trial requirements for trials of cases referred by the ICTR and national jurisdictions. Those steps, which included the abolition of life imprisonment in isolation with respect to any case transferred from another jurisdiction and the creation of a witness protection unit under the authority of the Rwandan judiciary, demonstrate how international judicial institutions act as a guide in ever-increasing domestic efforts with respect to international crimes. Rwanda's dedication to meeting international standards is one reason that it stands as an example, which is already beginning to be followed by others.

However, prosecution alone cannot maintain peace or achieve reconciliation. In that respect, we must also emphasize the importance of the outreach efforts, including training programmes, professional workshops, visiting professional programmes and partnerships with higher learning institutions, that the Tribunal has instituted throughout its existence to ensure that affected communities, along with the international community, understand the ramifications of the genocide and the lessons we have learned in our battle against impunity.

The legacy that will be left behind by the ICTR is still being written. The ICTR legacy committee, in coordinating ICTR efforts and engaging in inter-Tribunal efforts, continues to work vigorously to preserve our records and ensure ease of access to them for posterity. In that respect, the legacy committee is currently making arrangements to establish an ICTR legacy website, which will provide access to an even larger database of ICTR judicial decisions and case law as well as to the non-judicial legacy, including the speeches and papers presented by Tribunal officials over the years. Furthermore, the legacy committee is in the process of planning events to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda and the establishment of the Tribunal, to which we hope Member States will lend their support.

It remains my honour to address the Assembly. Once more, on behalf of the entire Tribunal, I wish to express our gratitude for the support members' Governments have shown over the past 19 years. As we complete the transition to the Mechanism and move ever closer to the completion of our mandate, I must once more call upon the assistance of Member States to find practical solutions to the problems that I have discussed here today.

I am humbled to be part of the rich legacy of the Tribunal, and I remain ever encouraged by the direction that international justice has taken in the two decades since the inception of the ad hoc Tribunals. I have full confidence that, through the efforts of the international community and with the support of Member States, the ICTR commitment to the sentiment that flagrant violations of international criminal and humanitarian law should never again go unpunished will continue to evolve in a meaningful way, leading to the eventual realization of our goal: an end to impunity.

The President: I now give the floor to Judge Theodor Meron, President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Judge Meron (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia): It is an honour for me to appear before the General Assembly — and to do so under the presidency of Antigua and Barbuda — in my dual capacity as President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and as President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. I congratulate you very warmly, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency and wish you the very best as you assume the responsibilities that come with that role.

Today, I am pleased to present both the twentieth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (A/68/255) and the first annual report of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (A/68/219), which is the successor institution to both the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). I would like to underscore my gratitude to all the stakeholders who have assisted with the work of the ICTY and the Mechanism, including the very smooth transition process. That includes, of course, President Joensen of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), Prosecutor Brammertz of the ICTY, Prosecutor Jallow of the Mechanism and Registrar Hocking, who is the Registrar of both the ICTY and the Mechanism.

Allow me to begin with a brief overview of the continued work of the ICTY in the fulfilment of its completion strategy.

Since my most recent annual report to the Assembly (see A/67/PV.24), the Tribunal has continued its focus on completing proceedings as soon as possible, and it has rendered more judgements in the year ending 1 August 2013 than in almost any previous reporting period. More specifically, the Tribunal rendered five trial judgements, three judgements on appeal, a judgement on appeal from an acquittal pursuant to rule 98 bis of the rules of procedure and evidence of the tribunal and four judgements in contempt cases.

Currently, the ICTY has four cases at trial and seven cases pending on appeal from judgement. I note that the Appeal Judges of the ICTY are also Appeal Judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and in that capacity have an additional six cases presently on appeal from judgement before them, as my dear friend and colleague President Joensen informed the Assembly a few moments ago.

With respect to the ongoing ICTY trials, our current estimates foresee two trials, in the *Karadžić* and *Hadžić* cases, being completed in 2015 and one trial, in the *Mladić* case, concluding in mid-2016. In the *Šešelj* case, which was previously expected in October 2013, the defendant filed an application for disqualification of one of the judges in his trial. A panel of judges that was appointed to consider the application upheld that application by majority. Further decisions in that case are forthcoming, and I hope to provide more details in my November report to the Security Council.

Any appeals from judgement in the four trials just discussed will come under the jurisdiction of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals rather than of the ICTY, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1966 (2010).

Turning to the ICTY's seven appeals, it is currently anticipated that appellate work on all but one case should be completed by early 2015. Appeal judgements in the *Đorđević* case and in the multi-accused *Šainović* case are expected by the end of this year, and another four appeal judgements are expected by early 2015. The one remaining appeals case, that of *Prlić et alia*, involves six accused and is not forecast to be completed until mid-2017.

Although the completion of the ICTY's remaining judicial work and the ultimate closure of the Tribunal are still some time away, the Tribunal continues to take steps to effect the institution's orderly and efficient closure. Among other measures, the Tribunal has developed a consolidated, comprehensive plan to facilitate the completion strategy of the Tribunal and the transfer of relevant responsibilities to the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. The guiding principle is that as judicial activity is completed, staff will be downsized, facilities will be released and physical assets disposed of. Those progressive steps will ensure that the Tribunal's closure is effected as quickly as possible while not impacting its substantive responsibilities or its ability to complete its mandate. Of course, all those steps will be undertaken while complying with the fundamental principles of due process and fairness.

Staff morale is inevitably affected in a downsizing institution, and the Tribunal, to my great regret, is no exception. I recall that the Tribunal's modest past proposals for a retention bonus in the form of a small termination indemnity have not met with success. That fact, together with the Tribunal's ongoing downsizing and the knowledge that many of our talented staff members may not all be able to find comparable jobs upon leaving the Tribunal, make maintaining morale all the more difficult.

Despite those challenges, the other principals of the Tribunal and I are focused on using all the tools at our disposal to sustain the morale of the Tribunal's staff. I remain, as ever, tremendously grateful that despite the many challenges they face, staff members continue to carry out their responsibilities with dedication and care, making it possible for the ICTY to fulfil the mandate with which it has been entrusted.

I would now like to turn to the progress of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, often referred to simply as the Mechanism.

The Mechanism began its work with the opening of the Arusha branch on 1 July 2012, and reached another milestone with the opening of The Hague branch on 1 July 2013. The Mechanism now has a presence on two continents, including offices in the United Republic of Tanzania and the Netherlands and a satellite office in the Republic of Rwanda. Our small core group of staff includes nationals of more than 30 countries.

With regard to judicial work, the Mechanism is seized of one appeal from an ICTR trial judgement in the *Ngirabatware* case. As already indicated, the Mechanism will hear any appeals that may be filed in the four cases still in their trial phase at the ICTY. Additional judicial matters — including requests to vary the protective measures granted to certain witnesses, proceedings related to alleged contempt of court and applications for early release — have also come before the Mechanism and have been addressed. I also note that the Mechanism would conduct the trials of three of the nine individuals who have been indicted by the ICTR but who, to this day, have not been arrested.

It was thanks to the dedication and cooperation of Member States that the ICTY was able to account for all 161 of those individuals whom it indicted — an extraordinary achievement. It is vital for the cause of international justice that we ensure a similar result for those indicted by the ICTR. I therefore call upon all Member States to take steps to ensure that the remaining fugitives — whether they are among the three to be tried by the Mechanism or are one of the six individuals whose cases have been referred to Rwanda for trial — are at last arrested and brought to trial.

In addition, in accordance with the transitional arrangements set out in annex II to Security Council resolution 1966 (2010), the responsibility for a number of essential functions has transitioned from the ICTR and the ICTY to the Mechanism. Those functions range from ensuring the protection and support of victims and witnesses to providing assistance to national jurisdictions, and from enforcing the sentences of those convicted by the two Tribunals to managing the archives of both the ICTR and the ICTY.

In carrying out those and other functions, and in establishing itself as an institution more generally, the Mechanism has benefited greatly not only from the dedication and efforts of its own staff, but also from the talents and expertise of the many ICTR and ICTY colleagues who, whether officially double-hatted or not, have taken on extra work and new responsibilities in support of the Mechanism. I am tremendously appreciative of all that they have done and continue to do.

As we move ahead into the second year of the Mechanism's operations, my colleagues and I will continue to seek to ensure that the Mechanism can serve as a model for international criminal justice and for United Nations institutions generally, including by adopting best practices from both the ICTR and the ICTY and then building and improving upon them. At the same time, we remain ever mindful that the Mechanism was created to be a temporary institution and that our responsibilities will diminish over time. Even as we establish our processes and systems and make decisions about our infrastructure and staffing, therefore, we are continually focused of how to accomplish our mandate most efficiently, while remaining as fair and effective as possible.

Before concluding, I wish to note that earlier this year the ICTY marked an important milestone: the passage of 20 years since the Tribunal's establishment by Security Council resolution 827 (1993), on 25 May 1993. In 1993 few were sure about how the Tribunal would take shape or what it would be able to accomplish. Today, I am very happy to report that the ideal embodied in resolution 827 (1993) — of the world in which accountability is the firm expectation, and not the exception — has become a reality.

Even as the ICTY moves to complete its remaining work, we may rest assured that the Tribunal will leave behind it a world transformed, a world in which — thanks to the new Mechanism and to the commitment and perseverance of members of the international community on matters of international justice — expectations of principled accountability for those who stand accused of atrocities will remain the norm, and the rule of law will continue to prevail. Because all that has been accomplished would not have been possible without the continued support of the States Members of the United Nations, that is, in a very real way, not just the legacy of the ICTY but the legacy of the international community as well.

Ms. Carayanides (Australia): I have the honour today to speak on behalf of Canada, New Zealand and Australia (CANZ).

CANZ reaffirms our strong support for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

May 2013 marked the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the ICTY, while the ICTR will reach that milestone next year. During that time, both Tribunals have played a major role in the development of international criminal justice and have made a lasting contribution to the international community's goal of holding perpetrators of serious international crimes to account. The Tribunals have achieved that both directly, through their jurisprudence, and through their significant and ongoing contributions to the building of national judicial capacities. Over that historic period, all 161 persons indicted by the ICTY have been accounted for. The ICTR has delivered its final trial judgement in relation to all those indictees apprehended to date.

The Residual Mechanism opened its branch in The Hague in July, following the opening of its Arusha branch in July 2012. That ensures that key work relating to the trial of any captured fugitives, the enforcement of sentences, the protection of witnesses and the maintenance of the Tribunals' archives will continue beyond the completion of the Tribunals' mandates.

With those significant accomplishments, both Tribunals are moving closer towards the completion of their mandates. However, they still have important work ahead of them.

The trials of Goran Hadžić, Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić continue before the ICTY. The trial and appeal phases of those three very significant trials represent an enormous amount of work. We commend the ICTY on introducing measures to ensure that its processes are as efficient as possible, while respecting in full the rights of the defendants.

The ICTR efforts continue on the pressing matter of relocating acquitted and released persons. We commend the efforts that the ICTR has made to relocate those individuals, including the development of a strategic plan to address the issue, and we urge Member States to provide the necessary support to the ICTR in that regard. We also urge Member States to ensure that the nine fugitives indicted by the ICTR for their involvement in the 1994 genocide are apprehended and brought to justice as soon as possible.

The ongoing support and cooperation of the international community for both Tribunals and the Residual Mechanism are essential to ensuring that they are able to meet those challenges. We therefore call on Member States to ensure that the Tribunals and the Residual Mechanism are adequately staffed and resourced in order to achieve the goals set out in the Security Council resolutions that established them and, very important, to ensure their lasting legacies.

For our part, Australia, New Zealand and Canada will continue to offer full support and cooperation to the Tribunals and the Residual Mechanism to give practical effect to our collective commitment to international criminal justice. In that regard, we thank Judge Joensen and Judge Meron for their important briefings this morning and for their continued service to the achievement of the Tribunals' goals. We are indebted to them both.

Mrs. Mørch Smith (Norway): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, namely, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

After almost 20 years of effective operation as ad hoc international criminal tribunals, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) are now in the process of completing their tasks. At the ICTY, all 161 indicted persons have been accounted for. The ICTY has concluded proceedings against 136 of the 161 persons indicted, and there are no outstanding indictments for violations of core statutory crimes. Similarly, the ICTR has completed all cases at the trial level and has made significant progress at the appeals level. Several cases have been referred for proceedings in Rwanda. The International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals has been established to finalize the remaining cases and judicial tasks of both Tribunals, with branches in Arusha and The Hague, respectively.

Those are significant achievements that move the ad hoc Tribunals closer to their ultimate goal of mandate completion. We commend both Tribunals for having made substantial efforts in successfully dealing with their caseloads despite various challenges. Trials and proceedings have been conducted under high standards of rule of law, and valuable contributions to the development of international criminal law have been made. It is important to recall, however, that both Tribunals are still functioning and are in need of continued support from the international community.

The remaining cases at the ICTY entail a substantial workload for the Tribunal's staff. Despite resolutions by the Security Council and the General Assembly on the issue of staff retention at the Tribunal, staff shortages remain a serious challenge, and that is affecting the pace of the Tribunal's continuing trials and appeals. We would also like to point to the ongoing work of ICTY investigators in locating mass graves in the region. Those efforts are crucial to ensure closure for survivors and families of victims and proper documentation of the crimes committed.

Under the framework of the ICTR, three fugitives remain to be arrested and brought to the Residual Mechanism. We strongly urge all States, and those of the Great Lakes region in particular, to intensify their efforts to ensure the arrest of the remaining fugitives.

The Nordic countries wish to emphasize the important task of ensuring the successful transition of cases to national jurisdictions, both from the ICTY to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia, and from the ICTY to Rwanda. Such referrals help to strengthen the capacity of those jurisdictions to prosecute violations of international law and to reinforce the rule of law in the States concerned. It is also important to give more attention to ensuring that victims receive effective reparation for their suffering.

Having a firm belief in the importance of justice for ensuring lasting peace, we would like underline the need for continued capacity-building and support to national jurisdictions both in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Marhic (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Iceland; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its member States reaffirm their unwavering support for the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). We support the process of the establishment of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals for both Tribunals, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1966 (2010), in order to preserve their important achievements and legacy. We therefore welcome the launch, on 1 July, of the ICTY branch of the Residual Mechanism and acknowledge the successful first year of functioning of the Arusha branch.

We praise both Tribunals as well as both branches of the Mechanism for their achievements and invaluable contributions to our shared goal of ending impunity for serious international crimes. The European Union and its member States thank both President Meron and President Joensen for their reports and commend them for their efforts in completing the work of the Tribunals. We also pay special tribute to the work of all the staff of the Tribunals and the Mechanism. It is important that both Tribunals get the support necessary to complete their mandates.

The Tribunals have played a key role in strengthening the rule of law and promoting long-term stability and reconciliation. Since their establishment, both Tribunals have embodied the need to fight impunity, and the refusal by the international community to let the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of international concern escape justice. They were forerunners in creating jurisprudence that is a source of inspiration for all national and international jurisdictions that are addressing and will have to address such crimes.

Both Tribunals have begun to hand over responsibilities to the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. We recall in that regard the importance of a smooth transition process in order for both branches of the Mechanism to carry on and protect the work of both Tribunals.

We note the challenges faced by both Tribunals in relation to staff retention and the loss of experienced staff members. We note with satisfaction the efforts of the inter-State assistance mechanism, Justice Rapid Response, in ensuring that the very valuable expertise and experience in international criminal justice of current and former employees of both Tribunals remains at the disposal of all States and international courts and tribunals.

In parallel, we encourage the Tribunals to continue to effectively prioritize their resources, while ensuring that remaining trials and appeals remain on track.

We recall that States' responsibility to cooperate with the Tribunals and the Residual Mechanism remains crucial for their ability to complete their mandate, in particular in bringing those indicted to justice. With respect to the ICTR, we recall that despite continuing appeals by the international community, nine accused individuals remain at large. The failure to arrest those indictees is a matter of grave concern. The EU and its member States note with appreciation that the Prosecutor has intensified efforts to track the three most wanted fugitives and, in that regard, has sought support from regional organizations in Eastern and Southern Africa. We also note that support from INTERPOL, Member States and other international organizations has assisted in narrowing the search for those fugitives. We praise the United States War Crimes Rewards Programme, which constitutes a useful instrument for the apprehension of indicted persons. We call upon all States concerned to intensify their efforts and cooperation with the Tribunal and the Arusha branch of the Residual Mechanism in order to achieve the arrest and surrender of all remaining fugitives.

We note that in the ICTY report (A/68/270), the Office of the Prosecutor acknowledges the assistance it received from the European Union. We will continue to support the Office of the Prosecutor. We also note that the States concerned remain committed to meeting their obligations towards justice, in particular towards the ICTY and The Hague branch of the Residual Mechanism.

Completing the process of rendering justice for crimes committed during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia is essential for lasting reconciliation. Full cooperation with the ICTY therefore remains an essential condition for the Stabilization and Association Process in the Western Balkans and is an essential condition for membership of the EU. Croatia's accession to the EU is an example in that regard.

The EU and its member States also call upon the Governments concerned to pursue with greater vigour domestic investigation and prosecution of war crimes. We welcome the signing of the Protocol on Cooperation in Prosecution of Perpetrators of War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity and Genocide between the States concerned in 2013. However, many challenges remain in coordinating the activities of judicial institutions in parts of the region. We therefore continue to urge all States to cooperate with both Tribunals and branches of the Residual Mechanism, in full adherence to their obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In recognition of strengthened domestic capacity, the Security Council, in its resolutions 1503 (2003) and 1534 (2004), calls on the ICTY and ICTR to transfer all lower- and mid-level accused to competent national jurisdictions for trial by domestic courts.

We welcome the ongoing efforts of Rwanda, in cooperation with international donors, to strengthen the Rwandan legal system and its ability to adjudicate cases from the ICTR. We confirm our commitment to support activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Rwandan judiciary. We note with appreciation that the Prosecutor of the ICTR continues to focus on monitoring the referral of cases to national jurisdictions in order to facilitate indictment, trial and judgement before the Rwandan High Court.

We welcome the work of the Tribunals on strengthening the capacity of national authorities to handle the remaining war crime cases effectively. We fully support the training and information exchanges as well as access to publicly available investigating material and evidence from the Tribunals. That is important for the Tribunal's legacy and for the domestic capacity to adjudicate war crimes. In its Stabilization and Association Process for the Western Balkans, the EU is increasingly underlining the importance of local ownership for handling war-crime cases in line with the need to fight impunity.

Finally, we welcome the steps taken by the Tribunals in terms of capacity-building, the dissemination of information and legacy. We recall the importance of the preservation of archives in the transition process to the Mechanism, as they remain an integral part of the history and the memory of both Rwanda and the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

We will continue to support both the principle and system of international criminal justice and its essential role in the reconciliation process, and we call on all States to do the same. It is indeed important that the knowledge gained and lessons learned in the fight against impunity are not forgotten.

Mr. Ahamed (India): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, and by reiterating my assurance of the full cooperation and support of the Indian delegation in the Assembly's proceedings.

I thank the Presidents of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals for their reports (A/68/270, A/68/255 and A/68/219) and put on record our appreciation for their work. We commend the efforts of the two Prosecutors in undertaking outreach initiatives, including training, aimed at strengthening the capacity of the national systems to handle the referred cases effectively.

We are glad to note that both branches of the Mechanism are now operational, with that of the ICTR in Arusha commencing its functions on 1 July 2012 and that of the ICTY in The Hague launched on 1 July 2013. That should ensure a smooth transition in the Tribunals' pending work to the Mechanism. The Security Council's establishment of the Mechanism, on 22 December 2010, through resolution 1966 (2010), was a key step in the two Tribunals' completion strategies, as the Mechanism is mandated to perform a number of essential functions previously carried out by the Tribunals, including securing the arrest, transfer and prosecution of the fugitives still at large.

It is worth mentioning that in the past year the Arusha branch of the Mechanism conducted a number of judicial proceedings and performed functions ranging from protecting witnesses to responding to requests for assistance from national jurisdictions. We are confident that the Mechanism will successfully build on the work of its predecessors in accordance with its mandate, and thus complete its pending judicial work in an efficient and timely manner, without compromising the right of any to a fair trial. The efforts to relocate persons acquitted by the Tribunals and those convicted who have completed their sentences and been released are significant in humanitarian terms and with regard to reconciliation and should be accorded priority.

The aim of the international community in setting up international criminal courts and tribunals was to punish the guilty and end impunity. However, trials through such courts do not always have the desired impact on the affected communities in terms of healing and reconciliation. When such trials are conducted by foreign judicial systems or tribunals, with little or no connection to the perpetrators, victims or offences, they are invariably decoupled from the political, social and economic context of the affected country and its people.

While the Tribunals have played an important role in promoting accountability and ending impunity, it remains crucial to strengthen national judicial systems so that they may prosecute serious crimes, since States have the primary responsibility for prosecuting such crimes committed on their territory or by their nationals. Therefore, creating effective national legal and judicial institutions that uphold the rule of law is essential, and it is imperative that the international community continue to promote the strengthening of national criminal justice systems by building the capacities of national investigative, prosecutorial and judicial agencies. In that regard, the ICTR's referral of six cases to the Rwandan authorities for trial is significant.

International criminal justice has also been criticized for its selectivity. In order to ensure the credibility of the system, selective and discriminatory approaches should be shunned and the role of political organizations minimized for consistent application of the law.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for transmitting the twentieth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) (A/68/255) and the eighteenth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) (A/68/270) to the Security Council and to the General Assembly. We would also like to thank the Tribunal staff for all their efforts and commitment to successfully completing their mandates.

The establishment of an ad hoc criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia as a legal framework for ensuring accountability and ending a tragic period for those living in Bosnia and Herzegovina sent a clear message that the crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia should be punished consistently and without exceptions. The same can be said of the ICTR. The latest annual reports show that the Tribunals have remained focused on the completion of all trials and appeals.

We commend the valuable assistance and coordination of the Secretariat's Office of Legal Affairs and the Security Council's Informal Working Group on International Tribunals in ensuring the smooth transition of the Tribunal's functions to the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. We welcome the fact that various measures have been taken to ensure that the Tribunal operates as efficiently as possible while preserving a high level of procedural fairness. We also acknowledge that significant efforts have been made to coordinate activities with the Security Council so as to ensure that the Tribunal is assigned its full complement of judges, in order to address any potential delays caused by the Appeals Chamber's increased workload.

We should underline that Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities continue to respond promptly and adequately to most of the requests of the Office of the Prosecutor for documents, as well as for access to Government archives. Our authorities also continue to provide valuable assistance in witness-protection matters and in facilitating witnesses' appearances before the Tribunal.

We would like to reiterate that since the end of the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina has cooperated constantly and constructively with the prosecution in The Hague and the Tribunal. Those cooperation efforts have been positively assessed in the periodic reports and are noted in the current annual report. We have taken note of all the other concerns raised by the Prosecutor and are fully aware that a lot remains to be done.

I wish to remind the Assembly that Bosnia and Herzegovina bears the greatest burden of prosecutions for war crimes. However, since 2005, when Bosnia and Herzegovina's court became fully operational, measurable progress has been made in prosecuting war crimes, and more than 200 cases have been successfully concluded. Nevertheless, according to the relevant statistics of domestic and international stakeholders, a large number of war crimes remain to be prosecuted in the domestic courts. We are also aware of the fact that the implementation of our national war crimes strategy needs an improved approach if it is to meet the deadlines the strategy has set. Stronger efforts must be made to effectively increase the pace of the overall case proceedings at both the State and entity levels.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

As the Tribunals steadily head towards their closure, the duty of continuing the fight against impunity and enhancing the reach of justice remains with the credible national prosecutors. To that end, our common goal remains the investigation and prosecution of all crimes committed and the appropriate punishment of the perpetrators. Regional cooperation plays an important role in that regard. We are therefore certain that the protocol on the exchange of evidence and information on war crimes, signed between the prosecutors' offices of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia, is serving as an impetus in strengthening communication and further enhancing coordination. We remain dedicated to further promoting and intensifying regional cooperation, considering that it is in the joint interests of the countries of the region as well.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would first like to congratulate the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Mr. Theodor Meron, on his re-election to the post. We would like to hope that all the efforts expended on the elections will not be in vain, and that the ICTY, under Mr. Meron's leadership, will still be able to reach its final closure with results acceptable to all States.

The ICTY's speedy closure, as we understand it, will be facilitated by the forthcoming election of a sixteenth judge to be assigned to the Appeals Chamber of the two Tribunals, a process that was launched at Mr. Meron's request. The election has unexpectedly excited heightened interest among States. So many candidates have been proposed that there would be problems listing them all on the ballot. Fortunately, after the news of Mr. Meron's successful re-election reached New York, the objections to our compromise version — which had not been immediately supported — for presenting all six candidates to the Assembly were removed. We await the results of the voting in the General Assembly with interest.

We thank the leaders of the ICTY and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) for their presentation of the annual reports on their activities (A/68/255 and A/68/270). On the whole, regarding the information presented in the June reports to the Security Council (S/2013/308 and S/2013/310), the situation in the Tribunals has not significantly changed. The parameters for the ICTY's timetable for the completion of its work, established by Security Council resolution 1966 (2010), remain the same. We regret the fact that in this situation, the leadership of the ICTY, despite opportunities, essentially rejected using a technical decision to enable it to refer the *Prlić et al.* case to the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

What can be said in its favour is that the ICTY's situation has at least not deteriorated since the June report to the Security Council. The same cannot be said of the Rwanda Tribunal, which, despite having the necessary resources, confirmed the information in the report about delays in the *Butare* case that exceed the limits laid down in resolution 1966 (2010). Unfortunately, it appears that we will not be able to avoid investigating this situation within the Security Council.

At the same time, however, we should not neglect to mention the positive progress made in the work of the ICTY regarding its handling of anti-Serbian accusations. We refer to the recent decisions in the case of *Stanišić and Simatović* in Trial Chamber I and in the case of *Prosecutor v. Momčilo Perišić* in the Appeals Chamber.

In conclusion, we would like to highlight the significant role played by the States of the two regions involved, as well as other States, through their support for the Tribunals and the Residual Mechanism. In that connection, we commend the high level of cooperation shown by Serbia with the ICTY and by Rwanda with the ICTR.

Mr. Pope (United States of America): The United States wishes to thank President Joensen of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and President Meron of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for their reports. They have provided exemplary leadership in the cause of international justice, and we salute their long and distinguished careers as jurists and global public servants.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the creation of the ICTY. As we all recall, that Tribunal and, subsequently, the ICTR, were set up in response to the horrors committed in Rwanda and Yugoslavia in the 1990s, when the slaughter of hundreds of thousands led to a wave of international revulsion and cries for justice. The ICTR and ICTY were founded on the idea that those responsible for mass atrocities, no matter what their rank or official position, must be brought to justice. Once they were fully up and running, the Tribunals began thoroughly addressing serious issues of international justice.

To date, the two courts have tried more than 200 defendants accused of heinous crimes, including top military and political leaders. The Tribunals have operated on the principles of fairness, impartiality and independence. They have also built up a robust body of international humanitarian law.

With the historic work of the Tribunals now nearing completion, the United States heartily commends the efforts of the Presidents of both bodies to enact cost-saving managerial and administrative measures and to transfer the Tribunals' remaining functions to the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. At the same time, we recognize that the exact closure dates will depend on the completion of ongoing and soon-to-begin trials and appeals.

Turning to the ICTY, we note that the Tribunal is continuing to focus on the completion of all trials and appeals, having rendered 13 trial, appellate and contempt judgements between August 2012 and July 2013. We are pleased that The Hague branch of the Mechanism began operating in July. We also salute the continuing work of the ICTY to build capacity among judges, prosecutors and defence counsels in the former Yugoslavia. The United States urges all the Governments in the region to continue to work towards reconciliation, while avoiding statements that inflame tensions, and to continue to bring accused war criminals to justice in local courts.

With regard to the ICTR, we note with satisfaction that the Tribunal has wrapped up its workload of trials and is continuing to complete appeals, hopefully by 2015. The Mechanism in Arusha opened in 2012 and is operating smoothly. The United States urges regional Governments to work with the Tribunal on the relocation of several persons who have served their sentences but are unable to return to Rwanda. We call upon all States to cooperate with the ICTR in apprehending all remaining fugitives and bringing those accused mass murderers to trial.

The United States remains committed to working with the United Nations and the international community to help protect populations from mass atrocities, through tribunals and all other institutions and initiatives at our disposal.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, Judge Meron, and the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Judge Joensen, for their comprehensive briefings. Their briefings, along with the annual reports of the Tribunals before us (A/68/270 and A/68/255), reflect the achievements and tenacious efforts undertaken by both Tribunals to successfully complete their mandates.

I would first of all like to take this opportunity to express our firm support for the International Tribunals, as well as for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. We urge Member States to maintain their support for all three institutions. The Tribunals deserve a positive assessment on several counts.

First, the Tribunals have fulfilled a dissuasive function by identifying and punishing those guilty of the gravest crimes. But they have also had preventive function, inasmuch as the possibility of being tried served to discourage others from committing new crimes.

Secondly, the Tribunals have served an emblematic function by reflecting a decisive step forward in the commitment of the international community to ensure respect for international humanitarian law, as by establishing the fact that certain crimes are so serious that they constitute an offence against humanity itself and should not go unpunished.

Thirdly, the Tribunals were the principal inspiration for the establishment, in 1998, of the International Criminal Court, which has changed the parameters in the search for peace based on the understanding that enduring peace requires justice. The Security Council has also contributed to promoting accountability, peace and justice by addressing other situations through tribunals assisted by the United Nations, such as the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

Fourthly, the fact that justice has been delivered by an independent institution has contributed to the identification and punishment of the guilty and to the clarification of the historical truth by exposing evidence of the crimes committed. Knowledge of the facts and overcoming the sense of impunity are necessary bases for possible reconciliation.

In that spirit, this year we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 827 (1993), adopted unanimously, which established the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Twenty years after the establishment of that Tribunal, we acknowledge its considerable accomplishments and progress in developing international jurisprudence, in obtaining justice for victims, in capturing all fugitives and in bringing to justice those primarily responsible for the gravest violations of human rights, irrespective of their rank. The Tribunal has contributed to strengthening national systems by working closely with local authorities.

With respect to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, we welcome the fact that it has completed all its legal work and met all its deadlines for appeals, and that it has proceeded with the transfer of cases to Rwanda. It is of fundamental importance to assist the tribunals in finishing their work within the stipulated deadlines. We listened attentively to the concerns expressed by the Presidents of both Tribunals with respect to their ability to keep up the pace of their work while also meeting the deadlines set for its conclusion. The judges expressed the view that the lack of personnel and the loss of highly efficient members of their staffs had affected trials and appeals. We share their concerns, especially with respect to the need to have adequate, experienced staff. The judges also raised the issue of relocating those who have been absolved of their crimes as well as those who have already served their sentences. Some of them have been living in safe houses in Arusha for the past six years. That is an important humanitarian matter that deserves careful consideration. For that reason, we support the strategic relocation plan that was recently presented to the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals, which we are honoured to chair. We urge Member States, in particular the members of the Security Council able to do so, to help resolve that persistent problem, and we congratulate those that have already increased their cooperation with the Tribunal in that regard.

We note with satisfaction the progress achieved in the implementation of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. We welcome the fact that both Tribunals have worked together to ensure a gradual, effective transition towards the Residual Mechanism. We note the progress with regard to the Mechanism, as noted in document A/68/219.

In conclusion, we consider it important to preserve the legacy of the Tribunals. As the work of the two Tribunals nears completion, there is no doubt — and we say this with conviction as Chair of the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals of the Security Council — that they have laid a solid foundation for international peace and justice through their development and implementation of international criminal law.

Mr. Starčević (Serbia): Let me begin by welcoming the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Judge Theodor Meron, and the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Judge Vagn Joensen. I thank them for their presentations of the annual reports of the two Tribunals (A/68/270 and A/68/255), as well as for the presentation of the first annual report of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (A/68/219).

The Republic of Serbia welcomes the commencement of the work of both branches of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals and commends the steps taken to ensure a smooth handover of functions. My country has placed continued and undivided importance on cooperating with the ICTY and will continue to do so also with respect to the International Residual Mechanism.

Let me recall that, in July 2011, the Republic of Serbia completed its cooperation with respect to all indictees whose transfer had been requested by the Tribunal. We are fully committed to cooperation in the area of access to documentation, archives and witnesses. My country has refused no access request by either the ICTY Prosecutor or defence teams, and all witnesses for whom waivers had been requested were granted the waivers, which made it possible for them to testify before the Tribunal. We note with satisfaction that the results of that cooperation have been assessed as positive.

At the same time, 399 persons have been tried so far in the courts of the Republic of Serbia for criminal offences committed against international humanitarian law. The Republic of Serbia therefore showed not only a firm commitment to complying with its international obligations, including the punishment of those responsible for committing crimes, irrespective of their ethnicity, but also to establishing the whole truth about the crimes committed during the armed conflicts in the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as we are convinced of the importance of making a contribution to establishing justice and the process of regional reconciliation. In that respect, my country has shown its readiness to accept its own nationals, as well as other willing persons tried by the ICTY, to serve their sentences in Serbia. We are also ready to provide full security guarantees regarding the locations in which those sentences would be served.

Let me recall that, on 20 January 2011, the Republic of Serbia signed an agreement with the International Criminal Court on the enforcement of its sentences. Under the agreement, persons sentenced before the Court for the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide may serve their sentences of imprisonment in the Republic of Serbia. It is stressed that Serbia is the first country in Eastern Europe to sign such an agreement with the International Criminal Court.

Taking into account that the purpose of punishment also includes the re-socialization of the sentenced persons, my country is of the opinion that this goal can hardly be achieved if those persons serve their sentences in countries whose languages they do not speak or understand, whereby additional impediments to their communication with the environment are created. Also, it should be noted that most of the countries in which the sentences are served are geographically far from Serbia, which makes relatives' visits much more difficult and sometimes impossible.

Since 2009, the Republic of Serbia has insisted on signing an agreement on the enforcement of sentences, and has actively endeavoured to have those sentenced by the Tribunal serve their sentences in their own countries. Regrettably, however, no breakthrough of any significance has been made in that regard. We consider that the main reason for the stalemate is the fact that the countries that emerged in the territory of the former Yugoslavia are not in a position to conclude agreements with the Tribunal on the enforcement of sentences, although the President of ICTY has emphasized on various occasions that efforts should continue to be made to sign agreements in sufficient numbers to enable the mandate of the ICTY to be completed successfully. We believe that the recommendation of the Secretary-General to the Security Council from May 1993 to the effect that the enforcement of sentences should take place outside the territory of the former Yugoslavia may have been valid two decades ago, but it has been evident for a long period that this is no longer the case.

Let me conclude by saying that by fulfilling its obligations with respect to its cooperation with the ICTY, as well as by trying war crimes in domestic courts with the highest professional standards, the Republic of Serbia has made a significant contribution to the Tribunal's completion strategy, as well as to the process of the normalization of relations among the countries of the region. All the results of my country's years of cooperation with the Tribunal indicate the Republic of Serbia's seriousness and its readiness to accept international supervision of the serving of sentences and to provide firm guarantees that the sentenced persons will not be paroled without the requisite decisions of the ICTY, the International Residual Mechanism or some other organ or body of the United Nations to be charged with those issues in the future.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): At the outset, let me join previous speakers in thanking Judge Theodor Meron, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, and Judge Vagn Joensen, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). We note with gratitude the progress made in the activities of the ICTR and ICTY, and the first annual report of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (A/68/219), during the period under review.

Tanzania reaffirms its unwavering support for the work of the ICTR and the ICTY. Both Tribunals have continued to make invaluable contributions to our shared goal of ending impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern and have been instrumental in bringing about a new age of accountability.

The achievement of the Tribunals represent a milestone in the development of international criminal jurisprudence. We therefore pay tribute to the United Nations, its dedicated staff and the officials of the Tribunals, the Governments of Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia and the international community as a whole.

We welcome the steady progress that the Tribunals have made during the reporting period towards the completion of their mandates. We are encouraged by the efforts that the Tribunals have made to ensure a smooth transition to the Residual Mechanism. We note with appreciation that the trials of the ICTR have been concluded in an efficient and timely manner without compromising fair-trial rights. We are confident that the ongoing appeals, including those under the Residual Mechanism, will enjoy similar rights and privileges.

Acquitted and released persons are still in the care of the ICTR detention facility in Tanzania and need to be relocated. We reiterate our call for urgent action to find host countries for the acquitted persons who remain in Arusha under the Tribunal's protection, as well as for the convicted persons who are still in the care of the ICTR detention facility in Arusha. We therefore encourage the Residual Mechanism to pursue, as a matter of priority, agreements with additional Member States for the enforcement of sentences. We call on States to continue to cooperate with and support both Tribunals as well as the Residual Mechanism in tracking and in apprehending the remaining fugitives so that they may finally be brought to justice.

My delegation is concerned that, as the Tribunals are in the final process of concluding their work, further staff attrition continues to impede the timely achievement of the goals of their completion strategies. We support the call to the Secretariat and other relevant United Nations bodies to find practical solutions to address the staffing situation and make it possible for the Tribunals to complete their work in a timely manner.

We welcome the transfer of cases to Rwandan domestic courts for prosecution. We note with appreciation that the Tribunals have continued to further develop their interaction with the authorities of Rwanda and the States of the former Yugoslavia to encourage cooperation with the Tribunals and support domestic war-crimes prosecutions. We hope to see those efforts being further enhanced in support of the Mechanism's mandate.

The establishment of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals is significant to the continued protection of the rights of victims, witnesses and persons tried by the ICTR and ICTY and to maintaining the legacy of the Tribunals. Allow me to commend the practical arrangements made by the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1966 (2010) in ensuring that the operations of the Mechanism begin. We are pleased that the transition from the ICTR to the Arusha branch of the Mechanism has been successful. We note that the inauguration of the operationalization of the ICTY branch of the Residual Mechanism as of 1 July. We welcome those developments and see them as an important step in the next phase of the work and, indeed, legacy of the Tribunal.

Mr. Estremé (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina is particularly appreciative of the presence here today of Judges Meron and Joensen, as well as of the presentation of the reports of the two Tribunals (A/68/255 and A/68/270) and on the work of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (A/68/219).

My country is a member of the Security Council, and as such we have had an opportunity to receive information in advance of those reports. We welcome the fact that the General Assembly is considering them today because, as the Council meeting on 12 June revealed (see S/PV.6977), all the Members of the Organization are interested in the work of the Tribunals and the Mechanism. Today's debate is of particular relevance because this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

We welcome the progress reported with regard to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, in particular that during the reporting period judgements were rendered in the first instance in five cases, four appeals and three cases guilty of contempt of court. We acknowledge the effort it represents for the Tribunals to adjust their work to the deadlines and time frames being contemplated against the backdrop of staff reductions, including translators. With regard to the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, we are pleased that the Security Council has agreed on a mechanism to elect an additional judge for the Appeals Chamber, as requested by the President of the Tribunal. Argentina supported that request in the Council and we trust that, with the elections to be held shortly, the Tribunal will soon have an additional judge.

My country welcomes the information concerning the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the meeting of the deadlines and forecasts with regard to cases at the trial and appeals stages. We also welcome the fact that transition to the Residual Mechanism continues in line with those time frames, including the delivery of the archives to the Mechanism by the end of 2014.

We highlight the importance of the appeal in the *Ngirabatware* case, which will be the first one resolved by the Mechanism. We also underscore the importance of arresting the three remaining fugitives and the fact that Security Council resolution 955 (1994) establishes the obligation of all States to fully cooperate with the Tribunal. Cooperation with the Tribunal is also important when it comes to relocating the seven people found not guilty and the three who have already completed their sentences. With regard to the Residual Mechanism, we acknowledge the progress in its becoming fully operational, as well as the fact that the Arusha branch has been operational since July 2012.

We also wish to highlight the opening of The Hague branch, on 1 July. That branch carries functions with respect to the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the manner that the Arusha branch does in connection with the Rwanda Tribunal. Argentina commends the Mechanism's work with regard to monitoring Tribunal cases sent to Rwandan national courts, as well as the attention given to ensuring continuity between the Tribunals and the Mechanism, which is necessary to ensuring due process at this time of transition.

Security Council resolution 827 (1993) marked a milestone because, five decades after the Nuremberg trials, it expressed the premise that impunity for serious crimes was unacceptable. It also reflected the commitment of the Security Council — and, along with it, of the entire Organization — to accountability. Twenty years after the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the international community should acknowledge the progress made in combating impunity thanks to both Tribunals. The Tribunals have made important normative contributions to the development of international law. They have blazed a trail on which there is no turning back — with regard to accountability as well when it comes to the fact that the international community has already acknowledged that there can be no lasting peace without justice. That legacy has been definitively shaped by the establishment of the permanent International Criminal Court, which today serves as the central point of the criminal justice for the entire international community.

It is not amnesty, be it de jure or de facto, that helps the victims of heinous crimes. Rather it is ensuring that justice is rendered by impartial and independent courts. Argentina once again expresses its support for the work of the International Crimininal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. On this twentieth anniversary of the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, we pay tribute to the Tribunal's outstanding contribution to combating impunity.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on the agenda items before us.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the eighteenth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (A/68/270)?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I also take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to take note of the twentieth annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (A/68/255)?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to take note of the first annual report of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (A/68/219)?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 73, 74 and 130?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

United Nations A/68/PV.34

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

34th plenary meeting

Thursday, 17 October 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe .... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 114

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

The President: The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2013.

The five outgoing non-permanent members are the following: Azerbaijan, Guatemala, Morocco, Pakistan and Togo. Those five States cannot be re-elected. Their names, therefore, should not appear on the ballot papers.

Apart from the five permanent members, the Security Council will include in the year 2014 the following States: Argentina, Australia, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea and Rwanda. The names of those States, therefore, should also not appear on the ballot papers.

Of the five non-permanent members that will remain in office in the year 2014, two are from Africa and Asia-Pacific, one is from Latin America and the Caribbean, and two are from Western European and Other States. Consequently, pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII), of 17 December 1963, the five non-permanent members should be elected according to the following pattern: three from the African and Asia-Pacific States, one from the Eastern European States, and one from the Latin American and Caribbean States. The ballot papers reflect that pattern.

In accordance with established practice, there is an understanding to the effect that, of the three States to be elected from among the African and Asia-Pacific States, two should be from Africa and one should be from Asia-Pacific.

I should like to inform the Assembly that those candidates — their number not exceeding the number of seats to be filled — receiving the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting will be declared elected. If the number of candidates obtaining a two-thirds majority is less than the number of members to be elected, there shall be additional ballots to fill the remaining places, the voting being restricted to the candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot to a number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled.

Also, consistent with past practice, in case a tie vote should make it necessary to determine the candidate to be elected or that will proceed to the next round of restricted balloting, there will be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to those procedures?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

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Regarding candidatures, I have been informed by the Chairpersons of the respective regional groups of the following. For the three vacant seats from among the African and Asia-Pacific States, there are three endorsed candidates, namely, Chad, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. For the one vacant seat from among the Eastern European States, there is one endorsed candidate, namely, Lithuania. For the one vacant seat from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, there is one endorsed candidate, namely, Chile.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall now proceed to the election by secret ballot.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting. In addition, ballot papers will be given only to the representative seated directly behind the country's nameplate.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers marked "A", "B" and "C" will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers that have been distributed.

May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "A", for the African and Asia-Pacific States, the names of the three States for which they wish to vote; on the ballot papers marked "B", for the Eastern European States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote; and on the ballot papers marked "C", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote.

A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains more names of Member States from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it. A ballot will also be declared invalid if all the names of the Member States on that ballot do not belong to the relevant region. If a ballot paper of a region includes both the names of Member States that belong to and that do not belong to that region, the ballot remains valid, but only the names of the Member States that belong to the relevant region will be counted. The names of Member States that do not belong to that region will not be counted.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Pereira (Brazil), Mrs. Vassil (El Salvador), Mr. Auväärt (Estonia), Ms. Abrahamsen (Finland), Mrs. Djan (Ghana), Mr. Biraro (Rwanda), Mr. Cimarra Etchenique (Spain) and Mrs. Thanarat (Thailand) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. and resumed at 11.10 a.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A — African and Asian-Pacific States

Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	191
Required two-thirds majority:	128
Number of votes obtained:	
Nigeria	186
Chad	184
Saudi Arabia	176
Senegal	2
The Gambia	2
Lebanon	1

Group B — Eastern European States

Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	190
Abstentions:	2
Number of members voting:	188
Required two-thirds majority:	126
Number of votes obtained:	
Lithuania	187
Croatia	1

Group C — Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	191
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	191
Abstentions:	5
Number of members voting:	186
Required two-thirds majority:	124
Number of votes obtained:	
Chile	186

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority and the largest number of votes, Chad, Chile, Lithuania, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia were elected members of the Security Council for a two-year term beginning on 1 January 2014.

The President: I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Security Council, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 114.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

United Nations

A/68/PV.35

General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

35th plenary meeting

Monday, 21 October 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe .... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 120

Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/68/135 and A/68/291)

Draft resolution (A/68/L.7)

The President: Many will recall that paragraph 101 of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action of 2001 invited the international community and its member States to honour the victims of slavery and the slave trade in this follow-up exercise. All of us will, no doubt, recall that in December 2011, the Assembly endorsed the initiative of Member States to erect, at United Nations Headquarters, a permanent memorial in honour of the tragedy of slavery and the slave trade.

Approximately one month ago, I had the distinct honour to speak at the unveiling of the winning design for the permanent memorial honouring those victims. Three hundred and ten artists from 83 countries drew upon their creative faculties to reinforce, through the medium of the visual arts, sentiments to which Member States had already given eloquent voice in the Durban Declaration and subsequently. The design that the judges considered to be most expressive of the desired message was appropriately entitled *Ark of Return* and its creative artist, Mr. Rodney Leon, is a native of Haiti, a country with an illustrious history and its own struggle to end slavery — a struggle that has taken a heavy toll on its people. Mr. Leon described his winning submission as depicting

> "a sacred space that is designed to psychologically and spiritually transport visitors to a place where acknowledgement, education, reflection and healing can take place."

Just as other monuments erected on the grounds of the United Nations serve to remind the international community to honour the values of peace and non-violence, it is my sincere hope and wish that the soon-to be-erected *Ark of Return* will serve a corresponding purpose as a tribute to the collective aspirations of this Organization, namely: peace, human rights, social justice and the dignity of human beings.

The year 2013 marks the 206th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. The General Assembly's engagement with the question of slavery and the slave trade continues with draft resolution A/68/L.7, before us today, as we commit once again to raising public awareness about the legacy of that dark period in our past. Since the United Nations began considering this item some years ago, there have been numerous initiatives at the national and international levels, dedicated to the noble goals of remembering and honouring all the victims of that monstrously inhumane practice. Through their various efforts, Member States, United Nations agencies and civil-society partners have celebrated the indomitable spirit of the victims of a tragedy that continues to be inflicted upon numerous persons today, albeit in more subtle forms, including

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social and economic inequality, hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/68/291) highlights the educational, outreach and awareness-raising activities undertaken following resolution 67/108. Those campaigns provide an opportunity not only to reflect upon the history and legacy of slavery but also to address questions such as the dearth of resources and materials in educational institutions worldwide on why slavery happened, the full extent of its consequences and what lessons we have learned from it. In addition to helping ensure that the past is remembered and never repeated, those activities also offer an opportunity to highlight the often-overlooked contributions that enslaved Africans made to their economies and communities.

Among the principles on which the Charter of the United Nations was shaped are those of equality and non-discrimination. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights; that no one shall be held in slavery and servitude and that slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms. By adopting the draft resolution today, we dedicate ourselves, once again, to the task of undertaking concrete and concerted actions to uphold those rights and freedoms. Once again, we also commit ourselves to initiating and supporting efforts that make it abundantly clear to the cradle of humanity what such violations of human rights and dignity represent. My hope is that our joint recollection of the horrors of slavery and the slave trade will move us to further resolute and concrete action. Let us make a fresh resolve today that slavery, in whatever form or manifestation, will forever be a thing of the past.

I now give the floor to the representative of Jamaica, who will introduce draft resolution A/68/L.7.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): The institutionalized system of slavery and its enabler, the transatlantic slave trade, represent an appalling yet consequential period in the course of our human history. They reflect a tragic age when successful efforts to divide the human family were played out on a grand scale, encompassing the vast geographic and economic triangle linking Europe, Africa and the Americas. It was a time when our common humanity was not yet acknowledged, and a man and his family, through barbaric exploitation, could claim ownership of another man, woman or child, and could see to their own needs and enlargement at the expense of other human beings. It was a time when nations became great and wealthy. Others emerged while some were subjugated and exploited. Some scholars posit the view that slavery is one of the most influential phenomena in history, shaping every aspect of the world as we now know it.

So it is an honour for me to introduce today's draft resolution A/68/L.7 in the Assembly, where once again the global community has the opportunity to condemn that contemptible and barbaric historical practice, but also to renew a pledge to ensure that nothing of the kind is ever again visited on humanity. Draft resolution A/68/L.7, entitled "Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade", the text of which is before us today, continues to take account of the importance of ensuring that current and future generations are made aware of the past and exhorted to join in a determination to prevent anything so dastardly from ever happening again.

A key activity in that quest is the erection here at United Nations Headquarters of a permanent memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Let me take this opportunity, as Chair of the committee established to steer the project to reality, to advise the Assembly of the successful completion of the international artistic competition to select a design for the memorial, held over the past two years.

At this juncture, I would like to express our gratitude to UNESCO and the United Nations Office for Partnerships for their excellent collaboration in conducting the competition. A total of 310 entries were received, from persons representing 83 nationalities. Sixteen contestants were shortlisted and evaluated through an anonymous procedure by an international panel of judges, all of whom are experts in their fields and reflect a cross-section of nationalities. Seven finalists were brought to New York and interviewed, and their models were assessed by the judges, who came to a unanimous decision on the winning design, *Ark of Return*, by Rodney Leon, which was unveiled on 23 September in a special ceremony here at the United Nations. I would like to once again congratulate Mr. Leon and the other finalists, whose works, we are told by the judges, were all of high quality and showed a good understanding of the depth and importance of the subject matter.

The *Ark of Return*, according to the judges, is an entirely feasible and appropriate proposal, which has an impressive visual impact and invites exploration by the viewers. We therefore owe a debt of gratitude to the panel of distinguished judges — Mr. David Boxer, from my own country, Jamaica; Ms. Nadia Bakhurji, from Saudi Arabia; Ms. Dominique Fontaine, from Canada and Haiti; Mr. Michael Gomez, from New York University, here in the United States; and Mr. Ashfar Isahq, from Pakistan — who undertook this enormous task on a completely voluntary basis and have collectively pledged their ongoing commitment to the memorial.

It would be remiss of me to not also convey deep appreciation to those Member States that have so generously contributed to the Trust Fund for the Permanent Memorial. We appreciate all donations received, which in many ways reflect the broader commitment to the goals of the permanent memorial project, as represented not only in the draft resolution before us but in those we have annually adopted under this agenda item since 2006. We also express thanks to a range of private individuals, corporations and foundations that have made contributions as well. That broadens the scope of ownership of and fidelity to this noble initiative.

The ongoing work to bring this worthy project to completion would not have been possible without the vision and unstinting support of a team of pioneers who laid the firm foundation on which we now build. Here I must mention my predecessor, Ambassador Raymond Wolfe, who worked tirelessly to bring the vision to reality. Allow me also to make special mention of Mr. Amir Dossal, former head of the United Nations Office for Partnerships, who was a committed partner and who, although officially retired from the United Nations, remains faithful to the initiative.

We will now embark on the final phase of the project, which is to commission the construction and erection of the memorial on a United Nations podium. The aim of the draft resolution is not only to endorse the erection of the monument. Although that in itself is an admirable accomplishment in honour of the victims of slavery, we consider that the more important aspect of the draft resolution is the fact that it that calls for broad education and outreach to disseminate information to the global public on the history and impact of slavery. The aim is to influence modern social norms in a way that rejects racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and prejudice and that promotes healing, tolerance and respect for diversity.

It is for that reason that we have continued to emphasize the work of the United Nations through the Department of Public Information in maintaining a focus on that important aspect of relations in global society. I commend the excellent work that has been done by the Department of Public Information over the years and implore all Member States to actively engage in the outreach programme envisaged in the draft resolution. The Secretary-General's report (A/68/291) illustrates the large selection of noteworthy activities that the Organization has undertaken across the globe to achieve that mandate. We encourage further activities to that end.

In commending this draft for adoption, let us be reminded that we share one humanity and that there is no place for prejudice and discrimination in the world today. As we mark those milestones, the best way to honour the memory of those victims is to fulfil their fundamental hope for equality, dignity, humanity and justice for every human being. I am pleased, therefore, on behalf of the Caribbean Community, the African Group and all our sponsors, to present this draft for consideration and adoption.

Mr. Kumar (India): I deem it a singular privilege to be able to speak on behalf of my country on this important agenda item before the General Assembly. I would like to welcome the Secretary-General's report on the programme of educational outreach on the transatlantic slave trade and slavery (A/68/291), and his status report on the United Nations Trust Fund for Partnerships—Permanent Memorial, that is, for the permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade (A/68/135).

The transatlantic slave trade is one of the most abhorrent chapters in the history of humankind. It ravaged African and Caribbean nations to satisfy the rapacious economic greed and exploitation of colonizers. The lingering consequences of its brutality and human suffering are visible even today. We must, therefore, take initiatives to ensure that future generations do not forget the grief and tragedy borne by the countless nameless victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. It is equally imperative that the international community take upon itself a commitment to ensuring that such crimes against humanity will never recur. Education has a critical role in creating awareness among current and future generations of the history, causes and impact of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. A better understanding of history provides a valuable perspective for confronting today's challenges.

India welcomes the various outreach activities and programmes organized in March by the Department of Public Information to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance at the United Nations, as well as in other countries, through its network of information centres and partner organizations. We stress the need for regular and adequate allocation of financing to the Department for organizing such events. We also welcome the initiatives undertaken by States in reaffirming their commitment to implement paragraphs 101 and 102 of the Durban Declaration, aimed at countering the legacy of slavery and honouring the memory of the victims of slavery and the slave trade.

The construction of a permanent memorial will be a fitting tribute by the United Nations to the millions of victims of the transatlantic slave trade. We are pleased to note that the international competition to finalize the memorial design has been concluded, and that the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly unveiled the winning design in September. With the sum of $260,000, India is the lead contributor to the United Nations Trust Fund for Partnerships — Permanent Memorial for erecting a permanent memorial. So far, however, the Trust Fund has received only close to $1.4 million, against an anticipated cost of $4.5 million for the memorial's construction. We therefore strongly urge all countries, and particularly those that benefited from the transatlantic trade, to come forward and contribute generously to show their earnest admission that wrongs were committed and that there is a sense of repentance.

As we recall the struggle, the degradation and the deaths of the victims of the transatlantic slave trade, we hope that a permanent memorial can be constructed at an early date. It will indeed be a small but fitting commemoration of the struggle of the victims, who suffered silently, with no hope of freedom, before they disappeared into the night. We have a chance to pay our humble tribute to those who suffered that disgrace by contributing generously to the Trust Fund. That is the least we can all do.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. I would like to pay tribute to Jamaica and all involved for the tireless efforts they have been making to the realization of the Permanent Memorial. I admit we all have to do more.

The transatlantic slave trade is the gravest crime committed against humanity with few rivals in its infamy and cruelty. The inhumane and barbaric manner in which it was committed, its magnitude and the time span over which it was allowed to continue have no par in history and will remain a scar on the conscience of humanity. Africans and peoples of African descent have suffered for centuries owing to that horrendous crime. Even after the official abolition of the slave trade, its institutionalized legacy continued to be a source of exploitation, humiliation, discrimination, bias, hatred, prejudice and racism against peoples of African origin both in the continent and elsewhere.

As we remember that unparalleled crime, we cherish the struggles of those Africans and their descendants, who aspired and dreamed to live in freedom and equality. We recognize, with great emotion, their contribution to the genesis of the ideal of Pan-Africanism, an ideal that inspired a people's movement in the diaspora, which was later joined by Africans from the continent. Indeed, that movement, among other things, created the momentum for Africa's quest for freedom from the yoke of colonialism and, later, for the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). As we are celebrating the golden jubilee of the OAU/African Union this year, we indeed remember those who perished and the immense contribution of those who followed them.

It is therefore imperative that we remember those who perished and were uprooted. That has meaning for today and for the future and posterity. We are of the view that a clear and frank analysis of the situation and the heroic struggle of those who rose up against slavery can provide a valuable perspective and be a source of pride and motivation for present and future generations in overcoming today's challenges.

In that connection, we have noted with satisfaction the successful conclusion of the international design competition for the Permanent Memorial and the selection of the design for *Ark of Return* as the model for the permanent memorial. However, the fact that as of June 2013 the United Nations Trust Fund for Partnerships—Permanent Memorial has received only $1.37 million as against the anticipated expenditure of three times that existing balance for the construction of the Memorial is indicative of how much more we still have to do. In that regard, we encourage Member States and other interested parties to make further voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund. We all have obligations, without exception.

In our view, the Memorial will not only serve as a hallmark for us to pay our respect but will also be a reminder for the international community of the grief and tragedy borne by the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

Africa welcomes the various remembrance activities and programmes undertaken by the Department of Public Information, including the commemorative activities at the United Nations in March 2013. We support the continued efforts of the Department of Public Information to utilize its network of global information centres to build awareness on the issue. We also welcome the initiatives undertaken by States in reaffirming their commitment to implement paragraphs 101 and 102 of the Durban Declaration of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, aimed at countering the legacy of slavery and honouring the memory of the victims of slavery and the slave trade.

As sponsors of draft resolution A/68/L.7, the States members of the Africa Group fully support the speedy implementation of the initiative of Member States to erect, in a place of prominence at United Nations Headquarters that is easily accessible to representatives, United Nations staff and visitors, a permanent memorial in acknowledgement of the tragedy and in consideration of the legacy of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The adoption of a draft resolution is the least we can do.

Mr. Strickland (United States of America): As a multicultural society, the United States remains committed to fighting racism, safeguarding the dignity of people regardless of race or background and countering the hateful legacy of slavery. We believe strongly in spreading awareness of the struggle of the men, women and children who fell victim to slavery and to educating future generations on that tragic past as a means of combating racism and prejudice. The United States continues to press forward on eliminating discrimination within our own country, as well as in joining the global community in creating a world of freedom and equality for all.

In addition, the United States has supported UNESCO's Breaking the Silence transatlantic slave trade education project. As part of that effort, we have engaged Governments and civil society organizations alike to raise awareness of the history of the slave trade as well as to highlight the invaluable contributions made by persons of African descent in every field of human endeavour. The United States is proud to congratulate Mr. Rodney Leon on his being chosen to design the Permanent Memorial. Mr. Leon, a Haitian-American, is a celebrated artist whose work has offered our nation space and inspiration to reflect on our painful history as well as on the progress we have made. His design, *Ark of Return*, will inspire us to remember and honour the victims of the transatlantic slave trade, to reflect on the past and the lessons we have learned, and to contemplate the steps we each must take to combat the lingering consequences of slavery and to eradicate discrimination.

The United States is honoured to co-sponsor today's draft resolution (A/68/L.7) on the Permanent Memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the translatlantic slave trade. We must never forget the terrible human tragedy of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade and the moral courage of those who worked to end it.

Mr. Magid (Israel): I would like to thank Ambassador Rattray and the Permanent Mission of Jamaica for their leadership and their efforts to bring this important subject to the forefront of the United Nations agenda.

The American author Robert Heinlein once said, "A generation that ignores history has no past … and no future". Today we recommit ourselves to memory so as to ensure that the tragedies of the past have clear lessons for the future. The transatlantic slave trade casts a dark shadow over history. The enslavement of Africans was cruel and dehumanizing. Thirty million people were forced from their homes, uprooted from villages and driven into bondage. Many have recalled the horrific conditions during their voyages and their conditions during their enslavement. The dark centuries of the slave trade represent one of the longest and most sustained assaults on the life, integrity and dignity of human beings in history, yet even after the abolition of slavery, living conditions for African communities remained horrific during the nineteenth century.

The Jewish people share the story of people who were persecuted. The Jewish Bible describes how the Jewish people emerged from bitter enslavement in ancient Egypt to become a nation in the land of Israel. They remained there until conquering forces expelled and scattered them across the globe. Powerless and persecuted, they suffered in every country and every century. Every day for 2,000 years, Jews prayed, asking God to return them to the land of Israel. At long last, in 1948, we realized independence and the opportunity to rebuild our own land. We built our State on the principles of freedom, tolerance and understanding.

The Jewish people identify with the suffering of the peoples of Africa and the Caribbean and all those who share a burdened history. Because we were born in slavery, we understand the yearning for freedom. Because we suffered the indignity of persecution, we understand the value of human dignity. And because for 2,000 years Jews' lives were held to be cheap, we understand the sanctity of life.

Israel is proud of its financial contribution to the Permanent Memorial in honour of victims of slavery and the international slave trade. We are honoured to be among the sponsors of the draft resolution on the topic, as we have been every year. The Memorial must serve as a call to action — a call to every nation, every leader and every citizen — to do everything they can to ensure that no human being is ever enslaved.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Yet as we gather here today, many around the world are not free. Every year, hundreds of thousands of people, mostly women and children, are trafficked across borders worldwide. The trafficking of human beings is a grave injustice that has no place in a civilized world. There is also no place in the civilized world for those who enslave others with hate, racism and prejudice. They are the fuel that power persecution, war and violence. We must believe in memorials. Through education, remembrance and vigilance we can ensure that the tragedies of the past serve as clear lessons for the future.

Israel joins with the international community today in advancing that work. Together, we must extend a promise to our children that freedom is universal, dignity is inherent, and that life is sacred.

Mr. Gaspard (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his reports (A/68/135 and A/68/291) and also to welcome the excellent work carried out by the commemoration committee for the 200th anniversary under the wise and energetic leadership of our friend and brother country, Jamaica. In that regard, my delegation would like to support the statement made by the Ambassador of Jamaica.

This morning's discussion is, for my delegation, a very special one. Indeed, it is occurring only a few days after 17 October, the anniversary of the death of the founder of the Haitian nation, Jean-Jacques Dessalines. It also takes place just a few days after the commemorative activities held by the authorities of the city of Savannah at the memorial erected to the memory of the Haitian heroes who took part in the great battle of Savannah, at the end of the eighteenth century.

The commemorative activities conducted by our Organization, the information provided by its Member States in their national educational programmes, under paragraph 8 of resolution 67/108, and the many programmes developed by UNESCO all show that we are on the right path regarding the goals we have set ourselves. My delegation can only encourage staying the course.

In the same vein, we welcome the noble initiative taken up by Member States to build a Permanent Memorial at United Nations Headquarters. The execution of such a project will be an important moment in the life of our Organization. Beyond its symbolic significance, the Memorial should serve as a real catalyst for unity and for a major reconciliation among peoples. The Memorial must also contribute to combating forgetfulness and to building this great work of memory, so very necessary in order to serve as a reminder that throughout history thousands of human beings have been deprived of their freedom and treated as things, as merchandise, as something that is valuable and to be exploited at will.

My delegation would therefore like to welcome the establishment of a trust fund for the Permanent Memorial, called the United Nations Trust Fund for Partnerships—Permanent Memorial, and takes this opportunity to express its deep gratitude to all States that have made contributions to the Fund. For my delegation, the Permanent Memorial will represent an acknowledgement of the bitter struggles that our ancestors waged to eradicate forever that cruel, inhuman and degrading order that the colonial and slavery system represented, to bring about a new world. Our presence here to discuss it is a clear manifestation of that.

My country was the pioneer of that great struggle. Haiti's contribution to the birth of that free world is incontestably and universally recognized, even if sometimes certain events arise to push us to forget or minimize it. It is important for us to briefly recall some historical facts that are universally recognized and which mark the contribution of Haiti in the liberation of humanity from slavery.

First, as we said at the beginning, Haitian fighters were in Savannah in 1779, fighting alongside American combatants in their struggle for liberation. Among those heroes, we can cite Henry Christophe, Jean-Baptiste Chavannes, Jean-Louis Villatte and André Rigaud, to name just a few. It is to pay tribute to those freedom fighters that the city of Savannah erected a memorial to their memory in October 2007.

Secondly, in 1804, during an unprecedented revolutionary war, we overthrew a colonial and slave order that was established on the island of Santo Domingo, which gave birth to the first black republic in the world. The island of Santo Domingo became the Republic of Haiti. One should emphasize that immediately after Haitian independence, hospitality and Haitian nationality were granted to all blacks around the world who were fleeing the slave order and arrived on Haitian territory.

Thirdly, once independent, the generals of that era, including Alexandre Pétion, helped several fraternal Latin American countries in their liberation struggles by providing weapons, ammunition and soldiers. In recognition of that support, some countries integrated the colour red, which is one of the two colours of the Haitian flag, into their national flags. We would also like to recall that the flag of one Latin America country was actually sewn in Haiti, and Simón Bolivar made several trips to Haiti.

Fourthly, during the Second World War, we granted hospitality to many peoples who were persecuted in their own homelands and elsewhere, including Jewish people.

Fifthly, in the 1960s Haiti played a major role in the decolonization of the Africa continent. Thus, among the other efforts undertaken, it is important to recall that many Haitian professors were sent to Africa.

The list is a long one.

In recalling those few historical facts, we do not want to talk about past behaviour; rather, we want to recall that Haiti has always moved forward with history and always played the role that history assigned to it. Here we would like to show that solidarity is not simply connected to the wealth of a State. It is first and foremost a matter of the heart, of generosity, of humanity.

All that is to say that we attach great importance to the monitoring of the commemoration of the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. The choice of theme, "Victory over slavery: Haiti and beyond," to commemorate 2014 is for us a source of pride, satisfaction and recognition of Haiti's historic role in the fight to end slavery. We welcome the choice.

At the opening of the international conference held in 2009 on the Haitian Revolution and the universality of human rights, the then UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, Mr. Pierre Sané, presented Haiti as the cradle of human rights. He said, "The universality of human rights was conceived in Paris in 1789, but the birth occurred in Haiti a few years later".

In conclusion, may the construction of the Permanent Memorial lead to greater respect for the rights of all peoples in the world, regardless of their place of origin or what they have suffered.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We Cubans are proud of our African roots. The identity of the Cuban nation was the result of a process of acculturation that occurred with inputs from various ethnic groups in difficult environments, first colonial, then neocolonial. From 1959 onwards, a phase of true integration began, where all the components of the Cuban nation were given equal value. We are essentially a blend of our Hispanic and African heritage. We have also been influenced by Asia and the Native American peoples.

In Cuba as in several other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, we can clearly see the consequences of the transatlantic slave trade. The colonial plantations of the island saw the arrival, as part of that cruel trade, of about 1,300,000 Africans. Those men, women and children were snatched by force from their African villages and families and sold as slave labour on the other side of the Atlantic.

With the passage of the centuries, Cuban culture and nationality arose, also nourished by our African heritage. Cubans are grateful to their African ancestors for, among many other things, their wisdom, joy, creativity and adaptability to adverse environments, the richness of their history and religious beliefs, the rhythm of their music, their energy in spirit and, essentially, their spirit of rebellion against injustice and their dauntless courage in the struggle for independence and freedom.

Freed slaves and their descendants were the main actors in the various phases of the wars that made it possible for the Cuban people to exercise their self-determination. As the commander-in-chief of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, said in his statement at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban in 2001:

> "The inhuman exploitation to which the peoples of the three continents, including Asia, were subjected affected the destiny and the daily lives of over 4.5 billion people living in third world countries, whose poverty rates, unemployment, illiteracy, diseases, infant mortality, life expectancy, and other innumerable calamities are impossible to enumerate briefly, are shocking and horrific. They are the contemporary victims of that atrocity, which lasted for centuries, and clearly deserve compensation for the horrendous crimes committed against their ancestors and peoples."

Developed countries and their consumer societies, which are responsible for the accelerated and nearly unstoppable destruction of the environment, have been the main beneficiaries of conquest and colonization, transatlantic slavery and human trafficking and the ruthless exploitation and extermination of hundreds of millions of children of the South. They have also been enriched through the unjust economic order oppressing humankind and the international financial institutions created exclusively by them and for them. That rich and wasteful world possesses the technical and financial resources to pay its debt to humankind.

Cuba supports the just compensation request put forward by the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Cuba also demands the special and differentiated treatment that developing countries merit and need, particularly the African countries, in terms of international economic relationships. Cuba rejects the shameful and selfish opulence of the few that is guiding the ongoing globalization.

Cuba supports and co-sponsors the draft resolution that is presented, each year, by the States members of CARICOM and the African Group. Cuba recognizes the importance of strengthening the activities of the United Nations and other international organizations, especially UNESCO, in the matter. It is the minimum that the international community can do to repair the crime committed against humanity in the form of the transatlantic trade that forced Africans into slavery.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 120.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.7, entitled "Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in document A/68/L.7, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, China, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Norway, Paraguay, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, the Republic of Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.7?

Draft resolution A/68/L.7 was adopted (resolution 68/7).

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Almeida Watanabe Patriota (Brazil): Brazil can not overstress its thanks to Member States, the United Nations and civil society for their tireless efforts in organizing and successfully accomplishing the international competition to build the Permanent Memorial on United Nations premises in honour of the victims of the transatlantic slave trade. That trade was one of the worst tragedies, as it was the largest and longest-lasting crime ever committed against humankind.

Brazil commends the joint efforts of Member States, in particular the Permanent Mission of Jamaica, for its leadership of the Permanent Memorial Committee, in which Brazil proudly participates. Brazil is convinced that the hour has come for the proclamation by the United Nations of the international decade for people of African descent.

As stressed by the representative of Jamaica, the establishment of the Permanent Memorial is a milestone; however, it is but a first step along the long and necessary path to achieve the broad education of the public in order to raise awareness against prejudice, intolerance and racism. Brazil will endeavour to make every necessary effort and work with Member States and partners towards the adoption of a draft resolution on the international decade for people of African descent, as mandated in paragraph 79 of resolution 67/155.

In conclusion, Brazil would request the decisive support of Member States and the President of the General Assembly to that end.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 120.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

United Nations

A/68/PV.36

General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

36th plenary meeting
Friday, 25 October 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe .... (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Mesquita Borges (Timor-Leste), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 63 and 13

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/222)

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/220)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

The Acting President: I now have the honour to deliver a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Ambassador John Ashe.

> "I am pleased to welcome members to these important debates, in particular that on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), since it provides us with a timely opportunity to review our collective efforts in providing international support for NEPAD and is an appropriate way to culminate this year's Africa-NEPAD week.
>
> "In many ways, it is an auspicious time for the African continent and it is fitting to begin by taking note of some of the positive developments on the continent. Experts now agree that Africa offers the most promising prospects for economic growth in the world, with sub-Saharan Africa as the second-fastest-growing region. Throughout the continent, we have seen significant progress in political governance, with a number of elections offering promise for future stability. Many countries can also take pride in recent developments in peace and security, and we look to those examples with the hope that the nations that are still struggling will soon follow. While we cannot deny that there are challenges confronting the African continent, the African people and African leaders are poised to face them as never before as they continue to harness their productive powers and grow in solidarity.
>
> "Today, as we assess international support for NEPAD, we can also acknowledge Africa's collaborative efforts to tackle its shared challenges. NEPAD, first launched in 2001, is a success story. Through the Organization of African Unity (OAU) — now the African Union (AU) — the African region has found a mechanism to facilitate a cohesive approach to its challenges and opportunities. It has chosen that type of strategic and progressive coordination as an effective means to realize goals in the areas of peace and security

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and socioeconomic development. As 2013 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the OAU, I warmly congratulate the people of Africa on this important milestone.

"NEPAD remains a strong framework for pan-African socioeconomic development and the essential blueprint for promoting development on the African continent. The latest report of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the implementation of and international support for NEPAD (A/68/222) suggests notable progress. I commend those positive developments and Africa's commitments in the areas of infrastructural projects, agriculture and food security, health and primary education and, last but not least, redoubling efforts to achieving the remaining Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

"The continent can also be justly proud of the establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), which has become a key component of NEPAD and marks its tenth anniversary this year. Through the Mechanism, African countries have committed themselves to the promotion of good governance in all its dimensions — corporate, political and economic. With over 30 African countries voluntarily joining the APRM, the continent is clearly demonstrating its commitment to good governance, transparency and democratic principles. As we celebrate that important milestone, I would like to encourage the countries of the region to keep up the momentum and consolidate gains achieved through the APRM. That review process is vital for promoting good governance practices among peers.

"Because NEPAD is so critically important for pan-African socioeconomic development, it is vital that the international community continue partnering with African countries and the AU on its implementation and on alleviating developmental challenges on the continent. That support cannot be overstated and is integral to the overall success of the programme. While many countries have been affected by the recent global financial and economic downturn, international partners should continue to work with African countries to ensure that NEPAD commitments are translated into concrete results on the ground.

"The United Nations is an integral and committed partner to NEPAD in realizing its objectives. I would like to commend the ongoing efforts of the United Nations, in particular the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, in supporting the full implementation of the programme. As President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, I pledge to continue to promote a good working relationship between the General Assembly and African Member States, as well as international partners, to ensure that NEPAD remains a high priority on the agenda of the Assembly.

"I also hope that several thematic debates and General Assembly-mandated meetings will contribute immensely to support for NEPAD — for example, the meetings on the contributions of South-South and triangular cooperation and information and communication technology for development to the post-2015 development agenda and the high-level thematic debate on the promotion of investment in Africa and its catalytic role in achieving Africa's development.

"My remarks began with a focus on the great achievements, and I conclude with a reminder of the challenges that remain. It is widely reported that many countries are unlikely to achieve most of the MDGs by the 2015 deadline. In the remaining time before the 2015 target date, we need to accelerate efforts and summon the necessary political will. And as we set the stage for the post-2015 development agenda, the General Assembly will need to focus on how that agenda relates to Africa. Africa's development priorities, as clearly embedded in NEPAD, must be skilfully incorporated into the new development agenda.

"It is my sincere hope that today's debate will be a strong demonstration of solidarity and support. As we are one united international community, let us continue to chart a practical way forward on successfully implementing NEPAD and creating meaningful change for people across the continent."

Ms. Kaur (India): Let me, first of all congratulate His Excellency Mr. John Ashe on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. We wish him every success and assure him of our fullest cooperation.

I am honoured to address today's joint debate on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the promotion of peace and development in Africa, including in its efforts to fight malaria. Allow me to also convey our sincerest appreciation to the Secretary-General for his timely and extremely informative reports on the agenda items under discussion today (A/68/220 and A/68/222).

Epitomizing the spirit of pan-Africanism, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, with its strong emphasis on infrastructure, agriculture and governance, is indeed firmly on course in realizing the vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful African continent.

India lauds the progress achieved by Africa in the implementation of NEPAD priorities over the past 10 years through multisectoral initiatives in agriculture, infrastructure, health, education, science, information technology and the environment. However, despite those positive strides, serious challenges remain to be addressed before the African continent can achieve all-round development and prosperity. Extreme poverty, hunger, a lack of adequate nutrition, conflicts and other ills continue to shackle the tremendous potential of the African people. It is therefore important to acknowledge that addressing Africa's development needs and challenges requires an unwavering commitment backed by resolute action, not only from within Africa but, equally important, from outside the continent.

As has been pointed outin the Secretary-General's report (A/68/222), total official development assistance to Africa has further declined, from $133.7 billion in 2011 to $125.9 billion in 2012. The report also points out that, despite a strong average growth of 6.6 per cent in 2012, it has not been inclusive or sustainable. Persistently high unemployment threatens to undermine the recent gains made towards social development and to derail the progress made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is therefore imperative that the international community remain resolute in its support for Africa through sustained cooperation, including the transfer of technology, resources and an enabling international environment, and immediately address the gaping gap between the promise and delivery of pledged commitments. In these times of political uncertainty and economic meltdown, it is more crucial than ever for the continent's development partners to stay the course and help African countries achieve their developmental goals.

The India-Africa partnership is based on firm historical foundations. Over the decades, it has grown into one of the most productive and durable partnerships. For the people of India, Africa is the land of awakening of the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, and our ties continue to be rooted in our history of solidarity against colonialism and apartheid. Our engagement with Africa has come a long way since then and today we have built a new template for partnership in the form of the India-Africa Forum Summit. That partnership is based on mutual respect and guided by the vision and priorities of our African brothers and sisters.

India and Africa are committed to pursue the ideals of democratic governance in multicultural and multilingual societies and inclusive development for the benefit of their peoples. India and the African Union launched a Plan of Action of the Enhanced Framework for Cooperation on 6 September in New Delhi. India is committed to assisting Africa, including in human resources and institutional capacity-building, education, science and technology, agricultural productivity and food security, industrial growth, including small and medium enterprises, the health sector, infrastructure and information and communication technology. Those activities are being implemented directly with Member States in close consultation with regional economic communities, the African Union Commission and the NEPAD Agency. India is also extending concessionary financing to develop socioeconomic infrastructure. Over the past decade, 170 lines of credit totalling $9.7 billion have been allocated, of which $5.8 billion was allocated for African countries.

There has been a spectacular increase in India-Africa trade over the past two decades. India-Africa trade has grown from a small $967 million in 1991 to more than $70 billion in 2012. A target of $90 billion has been set for 2015. There is significant scope to enhance and diversify it with coordinated and sustained efforts. India also actively supports African initiatives for peace and security on the continent. In the pursuit of that commitment, more than 6,500 Indian soldiers support United Nations peacekeeping operations in various parts of Africa.

There is a lot we can learn from each other's development experiences. We have redirected our age-old bonds of friendship to respond to the contemporary aspirations of our peoples and to build a partnership that is increasingly being cited as the beacon of South-South cooperation.

The India, Brazil and South Africa facility for poverty and hunger alleviation, which recently celebrated a special event here in New York on the occasion of the United Nations International Day for

South-South Cooperation, on 12 September, has already completed several successful projects in Burundi, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone to strengthen infrastructure and capacity-building.

Our partnership with Africa has the potential to strengthen global governance systems and to democratize multilateral institutions. It is indeed ironic, and a continued question as to the credibility of its representative character, that the Security Council does not represent the entire continent of Africa in its permanent membership category, despite nearly 75 per cent of its work being focused on Africa alone. Along with our African friends, we continue to stress the urgent need to reform the Security Council and to address historical injustices, by making that a reflection of contemporary realities.

The year 2015, which marks the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and 10 years since the 2005 World Summit mandate by our Heads of States and Governments to achieve early reforms, would be a fitting occasion to deliver concrete outcomes on our pledged commitment to reform global governance institutions.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in today's joint debate on the items "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support" and "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa". Our delegations thank the Secretary-General for his insightful reports (A/68/220 and A/68/222), which amply inform our consideration of the issues under those agenda items. We also appreciate the role of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, in conjunction with the Department of Public Information, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and other relevant agencies, in organizing the Africa-New Partnership for Africa's Development week, which provides useful background to our deliberations today.

The current debate takes place on the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union. That seminal African institution was established on 25 May 1963 by visionary founders who foresaw a united continent assuming full responsibility for its future, in partnership with the international community. In this year of pan-Africanism and African renaissance, CARICOM is pleased to renew its solidarity with Africa and its support for the attainment of durable peace and sustainable development on the continent.

The founding of the OAU preceded by a decade the establishment of the Caribbean Community, in 1973. Not long after that, the 1975 Georgetown Agreement united our two regions, along with countries of the Pacific, in the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) group, a cross-continental alliance committed to South-South cooperation and to a partnership with Europe for development. Our two regions, the Caribbean and Africa, have been animated by a common aspiration to chart a course of our own design informed by the wisdom of our respective experiences while learning from one another and the experiences of others. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that CARICOM has welcomed and continues to support the African-led and -owned approach to growth and socioeconomic development that the New Partnership represents. Through it, Africans can chart their own course to higher standards of life in larger freedom, surmount the ravages of conflict and poverty and fulfil the rich promise of their potential. The progress that has been made thus far illustrates the effectiveness and relevance of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a development model for Africa.

Africa has witnessed major development gains, even as it continues to grapple with significant challenges to peace and development. Seven of the 10 fastest-growing economies across the globe are based on the continent. Today, Africa as a whole is the world's second-fastest-growing region. Moreover, a growing middle class — currently 34 per cent of the population — is projected to reach 1 billion people by 2060. The World Bank's *Africa Overview 2013* notes that the region's poverty rate fell from 58.1 per cent in 1999 to 47.5 per cent in 2008, and growth in sub-Saharan Africa is projected to rise from 5.3 per cent in 2012, to 5.6 per cent in 2013. Various assessments indicate that Africa is on its way to achieving some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, notably MDG 2, regarding universal primary education; MDG 3, with regard to gender parity in school enrolment; and MDG 6, on reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

Despite those achievements, major challenges remain. The rate of poverty reduction in Africa is not enough to reach the target of halving extreme poverty by 2015. The continent therefore continues to run the greatest risk in the entire developing world of falling short of achieving the MDGs. Also, with about 65 per cent of Africans today below the age of 35, and over 35 per cent between the ages of 15 and 35 and with youth unemployment accounting for 60 per cent of continental unemployment. Africa's Governments will no doubt face increasingly pressing demands from their young population for decent jobs and better standards of living. Support for major continental undertakings such as those in agriculture, infrastructure, health and governance will therefore be crucial to Africa's future.

The burden of disease poses a continuing impediment to Africa's progress. Even in the wake of the 2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa, nearly half of the world's population remains at risk of malaria, and an estimated 219 million cases in 2010 led to approximately 660,000 deaths, most of them children under the age of 5 living in Africa.

The *World Malaria Report 2012*, issued in December, makes a compelling case that international funding for malaria appears to have reached a plateau well below the level required to meet the health-related Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed malaria targets. CARICOM urges renewed international commitment to support Africa and other affected regions against that preventable disease.

Given those realities, the international community's partnership with Africa will remain of great importance not only to Africa but to the world. Commitments made to Africa with respect to official development assistance, trade, the transfer of technology and capacity-building must therefore be honoured and sustained. The role of South-South and triangular cooperation will remain integral to the global response to Africa's development challenges as a complement to the commitment of traditional development partners.

CARICOM supports Africa's quest to improve governance and accountability, reflecting our shared commitments in that regard. The role of the African Peer Review Mechanism, now in its tenth anniversary year, has been instrumental in that process. In that context, we note that 33 countries have voluntarily acceded to the Mechanism and, of those, 17 have completed their self-assessments and have been peer-reviewed by the Forum of Heads of State and Government.

We express the hope that the stability being experienced by most African countries will be sustained and that setbacks to peace and security will be overcome, in the interests of the countries and peoples concerned. CARICOM therefore supports United Nations and African Union (AU) efforts in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, which are critical to the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development. We also support Africa's aspiration to have a permanent and non-permanent presence on the Security Council.

Turning to the bilateral relationship between our two regions, I am pleased to report that the Caribbean's age-old relations with Africa are being consolidated in modern times through strengthened diplomatic engagements, increased people-to-people ties and the pursuit of economic and technical cooperation for mutual benefit. The ACP group endures as an important mechanism for collaboration and in our relations with the European Union. A key emphasis of current efforts is on the structural transformation of ACP economies to ensure that a significant proportion of the wealth generated from our natural recourses, especially minerals and agricultural commodities, remain within our countries for their sustainable development.

CARICOM and the AU continue to partner in the AU diaspora process, which constitutes an ongoing link among member States of our two regions. At the United Nations, CARICOM and Africa have engaged together and with other partners in undertaking to erect in a place of prominence at United Nations Headquarters a permanent memorial to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. We reached an important milestone in that endeavour with the unveiling, last September, of the winning design for the memorial. We will continue to work with all partners to see that project through to a successful conclusion.

CARICOM and Africa will have much on which to collaborate in the development of the post-2015 development agenda.

In conclusion, the Caribbean Community takes this opportunity to express its confidence in the prospects for Africa's continued progress. Africa's renaissance heralds the promise of a brighter day not only for the people of that great continent, but also for the people of the world at large. We therefore renew our commitment to partnership in the cause of mutual success.

Dato Ismail (Brunei Darussalam): I have the honour to address the General Assembly this morning on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which comprises Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic

Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports (A/68/220 and A/68/222).

ASEAN attaches great importance to its friendship and cooperation with Africa, and we share the same aspirations for the development of our regions. Relations between the countries of our two regions have also been enhanced through solidarity, cooperation and mutual respect.

We acknowledge the good progress that many African countries have made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We also acknowledge the challenges faced by African countries, and we understand their difficulties in attaining the MDGs by 2015.

We note that the efforts of African countries have been slowed by economic crises, political upheavals, natural disasters and the decline of humanitarian assistance. In that regard, ASEAN continues to encourage efforts through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to address those concerns, especially by prioritizing and mainstreaming the issues of health, education and gender in the agenda. Furthermore, ASEAN welcomes the valuable contributions made by the African Peer Review Mechanism to strengthening the engagement between African Governments and their peoples.

At the international level, ASEAN welcomes the constructive role and assistance of the United Nations, such as the launching of the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review the implementation of commitments made to Africa's development.

Individually, ASEAN countries have also strengthened their relations with African Member States. Each of us, in our own way, has offered capacity-building programmes and provided educational scholarships to the African countries.We hope that our assistance has benefited African countries and helped them make progress towards attaining the MDGs by 2015. Above all, we share the view of many African countries that have placed great emphasis on the importance of including poverty eradication in the post-2015 agenda.

Turning to the issue of malaria, both ASEAN and African countries have been affected by that contagious disease. ASEAN therefore supports Africa's efforts to combat malaria and other diseases, including HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. ASEAN welcomes the establishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to help developing countries eradicate those deadly pandemics. Each ASEAN member State has different experiences and areas of expertise, and we stand ready to share our best practices with African countries.

In that regard, ASEAN joins the Secretary-General's call upon other countries in a position to contribute, as mentioned in his report, to continue and to redouble efforts to help accelerate the achieving of MDGs and sustainable development and sustainable growth in Africa. In addition, ASEAN looks forward to sharing and exchanging information and experiences on development-related issues. We hope all those combined efforts will aid our African colleagues in achieving their Goals.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Poulsen (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Let me start by emphasizing the importance the EU and its member States attach to the EU-Africa partnership and to the economic and social development of African countries. We are proud of having built a strategic partnership between Europe and Africa — the first region-to-region strategic partnership in the world — having at its heart the principles of African unity, mutual interdependence and enhanced cooperation.

The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, established in 2007, reflects the shared vision and commitment to work towards the common goals of Africa's 54 countries and the European Union's 28 member States — a combined population of 1.5 billion citizens. Next April in Brussels, Europe and Africa will meet for the fourth Africa-Europe Summit to take that Partnership to a new level. We will advance further in promoting sustainable development in our two regions.

in nurturing and defending democracy and basic freedoms and in offering a better future to our citizens.

Africa is in the process of a long-term political and socioeconomic transformation, as we have heard from presentations and discussions this week in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the African Peer Review Mechanism and the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union.

It is with great satisfaction that we witness Africa realizing its huge potential, with impressive levels of growth — 5 per cent on average, and up to double that in some countries. Seven out of the world's 10 fastest-growing economies are African. There is a rapidly emerging middle class and a young, dynamic, fast-growing population that is expected to double by 2050. Those are all huge assets that are already transforming the continent for the better. Africa's economic and social development benefits first and foremost the people of Africa, but we believe it is also in the interests of the European Union.

Recognizing the principle of African solutions for African challenges, we acknowledge the essential role of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in the definition of continent-wide economic and political governance policy frameworks and programmes to underpin that transformation and to address the significant challenges still ahead of us, in particular in eradicating poverty and making sure that growth and wealth benefit the largest number of people.

For our part, we would like to reassure delegations that the European Union is and will remain Africa's most important partner as far as development aid is concerned and, more important, in trade, investment, security and people-to-people contacts.

The EU and its member States remain Africa's most important donors, providing 45 per cent — equivalent to €21 billion — of the aid targeting the continent in 2011 alone. The support covers all of NEPAD's strategic focus areas. It includes, inter alia, support to the African Peer Review Mechanism as the main African-led framework to monitor and promote good governance on the continent, and support aligned to two NEPAD programmes recommended by the General Assembly in resolution 67/294, on NEPAD, adopted a few months ago, for increased alignment by development partners: the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.

It is estimated that the lack of adequate infrastructure can reduce productivity by as much as 40 per cent. That is why Africa gives great importance to its Programme for Infrastructure Development, and that is why a cornerstone of our cooperation is the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund, which has a total funding of €746 million.

Boosting agricultural productivity, food security and resilience is another major priority in achieving the goal of eradicating poverty and tapping Africa's potential. That is why we are providing support to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme at the continental, regional and national levels.

The European Union also remains the biggest trading partner for the African continent, accounting for one third of Africa's total trade. European Union countries also invest considerably in Africa. From 2005 to 2010, European Union countries were responsible for 43.7 per cent of foreign direct investment in Africa.

Africa continues to face a huge burden of potentially preventable and treatable diseases. We know that malaria and other communicable and non-communicable diseases inflict a heavy burden on Africa, particularly on women, children and the most vulnerable. The European Union and its member States will continue their collective support, always seeking the most efficient modes of delivery, by working through national Governments, but also with the relevant organizations and mechanisms. Those include the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which the European Commission has been associated with since it was founded 12 years ago. Since then the Commission has contributed more than €1.1 billion to the Global Fund. Collectively, the EU and its member States have been contributing 50 per cent to the Global Fund's budget so far. Combating diseases such as malaria, through strengthened national health systems that are responsive and able to deliver comprehensive, quality health services for the entire population, is, in our view, one of the most effective ways to alleviate poverty and promote equitable and sustainable economic growth.

The Africa-EU partnership goes beyond development to tackle other issues of common interest, such as peace and security, which are essential for the development and prosperity of any country. It is universally recognized that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

The African Union is stepping up actions to help to resolve the conflicts on the continent. We welcome that development and are directly supporting Africa's capability to manage African problems. Since 2004, the EU has provided more than €1.1 billion to the African Peace Facility to fund the African-led Peace Support Operations Division, strengthen the African Peace and Security Architecture and operationalize the early-response mechanism.

Let me conclude by emphasizing that the European Union and its member States remain fully committed to supporting Africa and Africans in their quest for peace, democratic governance, human rights and sustainable development.

Ms. AlGharabally (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to discuss agenda item 63, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support", along with its sub-items (a) and (b). We have taken note of the two reports of the Secretary-General contained in documents A/68/220 and A/68/222, which emphasize the political measures taken by Africa countries and organizations to implement the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

We have also reviewed the evident progress made over the past 12 months on the implementation of NEPAD. In his report, the Secretary-General emphasizes the need to continue to strengthen partnerships in security, food security, development, women's education and empowerment, the enhancement of the rule of law, and general education with a view to promoting social, political and economic development in Africa.

Kuwait considers those matters highly important, given the close and historic links between the State of Kuwait and the African continent and in the light of the difficult concerns and challenges faced by the continent, which require the stepped-up efforts of the international community to address them. Africa continues to face drought, desertification, disease and armed conflict and other obstacles to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

It has been 12 years since African Heads of State and Governments adopted NEPAD as a global partnership to achieve economic and social development in Africa; it has been 11 years since the General Assembly convened a high-level dialogue on NEPAD (see A/57/PV.11), in September 2002, and adopted resolution 57/7 (see A/57/PV.43) in November of that year. It has also been 12 years since United Nations organs and other specialized agencies established true development partnerships with Africa in support of development efforts.

It is unfortunate, however, that despite the significant economic progress seen in a number of African countries, many people and nations continue to suffer owing to rising poverty and the incidence of contagious diseases, malaria and HIV/AIDS, in parallel with a lack of economic development support projects. That is why the international community must seriously redouble its efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, particularly the MDGs, with a long-term ambitious view to the Agenda 2063 Vision.

We firmly believe that development must be stepped up through the comprehensive efforts of all African and Arab States. From the start, Kuwait has persisted in fulfilling its pledges to that end through all of its partnerships and international commitments. In that context, Kuwait affirms its ongoing tireless efforts to support developing countries generally, and African countries in particular, both officially and via the private sector.

Kuwait's official development assistance remains an ongoing aspect of its foreign policy, for we strongly believe that economic development will benefit all and will strengthen partnerships and cooperation, while at the same time strengthening the global economic and trade regime. My country will continue to support the aspirations and efforts of developing countries to that end, especially African countries.

The State of Kuwait has enjoyed partnerships with African States throughout history, which have been reinforced at the political and economic levels through unique bilateral relationships. We would recall the key role of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and its presence in 48 of the 54 African Union States. Today, the Fund is continuing to expand its activities and financing efforts in 102 States, including projects in agriculture, transportation, energy, water, infrastructure, health and education. The African continent has been a priority of the Fund, which has invested more than $6.4 billion therein. It has also contributed to an initiative of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 1996 to reduce the debt of 24 African Union countries.

Kuwait has also launched and contributed to a fund of $100 million aimed at ensuring a life of dignity, as many countries have been unable to attend adequately to their needs owing to the 2007-2008 global food crisis. We have also contributed more than $300 million to various other funds aimed at reducing famine and poverty in Africa. We also contributed the substantial sum of $500 million to the holding of a donors conference in support of the eastern part of the Sudan. All of those efforts show our deep commitment to Africa.

Kuwait, which this year is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its admission as a State Member of the United Nations, has provided support to many of the Organization's agencies, organs and bodies. We recognize the importance of the coordinated action needed to address the difficulties and challenges facing the United Nations. In that connection, from 18 to 20 November, the State of Kuwait will host the third Africa-Arab Summit on partnerships for investment and development. We hope it will serve to strengthen cooperation and stability on both continents.

Kuwait underscores that, in the light of the historical relationships, legacy, interests and common destiny of Kuwait and Africa and the international community and Africa, the international community, the private sector, Government and non-governmental organizations and civil society should assist the countries and peoples of Africa in fulfilling their aspirations and achieving their economic and development goals.

Ms. Bagley (United States of America): The United States welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/68/222), as well as his report entitled "2001 to 2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa" (A/66/169).

The United States strongly supports the ongoing efforts of many African countries to generate broad-based, sustained and inclusive economic growth that enables them to reduce poverty and unemployment and integrate more successfully into the global economy. We are encouraged by their work to create a more enabling business environment in their focus on infrastructure development and cooperation. We commend the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency for its efforts to support initiatives of individual Governments alongside the African Union, the United Nations and the African Development Bank. This is critical for attracting domestic investment and encouraging a vibrant private sector.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the United States commends its participants and their determination to share experiences and reinforce best practices. We observe as well the obvious dedication of the APRM secretariat to that process.

The United States continues to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development as the African States' collective vision and strategic framework for socioeconomic development in Africa. We support NEPAD's priorities for democratization, good governance and economic transparency, as well as its initiatives to enhance regional and national infrastructure, food security and nutrition. I would like to highlight briefly some United States initiatives in the area of food security and energy infrastructure development that support NEPAD objectives.

African countries are essential partners in United States food security initiatives. In 2012, the Feed the Future initiative has helped over 7 million food producers worldwide to adopt improved agricultural technology for over 4 million hectares of land under improved cultivation and management practices, to increase the exports of targeted commodities by $84 million and to increase the value of agricultural and rural loans by $150 million. The programme also reached over 12 million children with nutrition programmes that have reduced anaemia, supported community gardens, fostered fortification and treated acute malnutrition.

The United States also supports the work of the African Union and African nations to invest in the development of their agricultural sectors under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. In 2012, the United States leveraged its presidency of the Group of Eight (G-8) to deepen the global commitment to food security. At the G-8 Summit hosted by President Obama at Camp David, African Heads of State, corporate leaders and G-8 members pledged to partner through the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, working with the African Union and Grow Africa, to lift 50 million people out of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa by 2022. Later this year, we plan to launch the Climate-Smart Agriculture Alliance, working with South Africa and others, to underpin and accelerate the implementation of climate-smart agricultural practices.

In June President Obama launched the Power Africa initiative, one of a number of United States actions to support infrastructure development. With an initial set of six partner countries, Power Africa aims to add more than 10,000 megawatts of cleaner, more efficient electricity generation and to improve the governance and transparency with which Africa's conventional energy resources are managed. The trend towards increasing domestic-resource mobilization in support of those projects is remarkable. We agree with NEPAD participants that effective and transparent revenue collection and procurement structures are key enablers and that public investment catalyses private investment.

Turning to the report on malaria, the United States has for many years demonstrated a commitment to the prevention and treatment of malaria, and we will continue to work with national Governments and other partners to lead the effort to end deaths from malaria. The President's Malaria Initiative, launched in 2005, represented a historic $1.2 billion five-year expansion of United States Government resources to fight malaria in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2008, $5 billion over five more years were allocated to halving the burden of malaria in 70 per cent of at-risk populations in sub-Saharan Africa. The President's Malaria Initiative now focuses on 19 countries in Africa. In 2012 alone, over 50 million people were protected against malaria through those efforts.

The global malaria fight is succeeding. Deaths decreased by one third over the past decade, from 1 million to an estimated 600,000 annually. We are particularly proud of the catalytic role that United States financial and technical contributions have played in reducing the devastating burden of malaria in terms of child mortality. Working in close partnership with host countries and other development partners, the United States goal over the next five years is to sustain and build on those successful efforts. We encourage all donor and recipient nations to support global malaria control efforts through appropriate financial contributions and stronger political commitments. If each affected African country works with partners in malaria prevention, as many did in HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, the goal of a malaria-free Africa will be attainable sooner.

Mr. Sinhaseni (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

At the outset, Thailand wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: eleventh consolidated progress report on implementation and international support" (A/68/222) and "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/68/220).

Africa is a continent with enormous potential, endowed with human capital, a diverse environment and natural resources. Through the unwavering commitments and efforts of African countries, their partners and regional organizations, we have seen progress in some flagship development programmes, as stated in the Secretary-General's report. However, as the Secretary-General also notes, persistent challenges to development in Africa remain. With the year 2015 fast approaching, some countries still lag behind and are unlikely to achieve their Millennium Development Goals. Both persistent and emerging global challenges remain unresolved, including famine, poverty, pandemics, climate change, economic crisis, political turmoil and terrorism. Those challenges need to be urgently addressed in a holistic manner.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is proof that establishing partnerships for development is the right approach. It makes far-reaching goals achievable and some seemingly impossible goals possible. Thailand therefore attaches importance to fostering partnership with our brothers and sisters in Africa.

The year 2013 marks a new chapter in Thai-African relations. We are set to enhance our strategic partnership with Africa through the Thai-Africa Initiative, which is one of the most important items in Thailand's foreign-policy agenda. The partnership will be based on three main pillars, namely, development, economics and cooperation. As part of the Initiative, Thailand hosted the second senior officials meeting in September, with participants from 37 African countries. The meeting discussed modalities for advancing the Initiative. Several areas of possible cooperation were identified, including food security, agriculture, agro-processing, energy, human resources development, sustainable development, infrastructure and the empowerment of women. A high-level dialogue between Thai and African leaders, which Thailand will host on 3 and 4 February 2014, will give further impetus to the Initiative and put it into action.

Food security remains a serious issue. Greater efforts must be made to raise Africa's agricultural productivity, as recommended in the Secretary-General's report. Thailand is determined to increase our cooperation through the exchange of know-how on sustainable agricultural development and food processing with our African partners. We will also offer agricultural cooperation programmes specifically tailored to the needs of individual African countries.

Human capital is the most valuable resource for development, and therefore Thailand gives high priority to cooperation with our African partners in human resource development. We will continue to offer scholarships for higher education and fellowships for training. We will also carry out joint development projects in areas in which we have expertise that could be of value to Africa, such as fisheries, health care and rural development.

Thailand, as one of the three donor countries to the Yokohama Action Plan for the period 2013-2017, will continue its participation in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). We see TICAD as a very important platform for enhancing the development of Africa. Thailand will also continue its engagement with Africa in a wide range of areas, in the spirit of South-South cooperation. We value highly and hope to increase our triangular cooperation with such United Nations agencies as the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development through the International Trade and Development Centre based in Bangkok.

Health is another vital issue, for sustainable growth and development cannot be achieved without a healthy population. Thailand has undertaken a proactive policy to roll back malaria. We have set a target of reducing the malaria-affected area of Thailand to 20 per cent by 2020. Not only have we forged close cooperation with our neighbours in the greater Mekong region, but we have now extended our support to Africa. Our African partners now include Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Gambia, Mali and Senegal. Technology-transfer projects for the local production of malaria drugs have also been successfully implemented. Thailand is also committed to, and actively advocates, universal and equitable access to treatment and medication without discrimination.

It is Thailand's firm belief that sustainable development and durable peace and security are mutually reinforcing. We agree totally with the Secretary-General, who states in his report that the consolidation of democracy and the entrenchment of the rule of law and good governance are critical to Africa's economic and political stability. On our part, we will continue to play our role in contributing to peace and security in Africa. Our men and women have participated, and are currently participating, in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the counter-piracy task groups in the Gulf of Aden and in Somalia. Our African brothers and sisters and the international community can continue to count on Thailand to support Africa and the international community in achieving and maintaining peace and security.

Thailand is committed to strengthening the global partnership for development in Africa. We will be more than happy to share our experiences and best practices in the various areas of development with our African brothers and sisters, so that our two continents, while geographically far apart, will become ever closer through the spirit of cooperation.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Recently, the African continent has seen strikingly positive changes. The main credit for that belongs to Africans themselves. Despite ongoing challenges, Africa continues to confidently move towards broad transformation and modernization. Russia welcomes the efforts that the African community is making. The active participation of African countries in global political, economic and humanitarian processes is an important factor in the successful implementation of the priorities of the global socioeconomic agenda.

We support coordinated measures to help achieve the sustainable development of the African continent. We attach high priority to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and we are currently participating in agreed steps to provide NEPAD with comprehensive assistance, both bilaterally and through existing international mechanisms, including the Group of Eight (G-8) and the Group of 20.

For many decades, Russia has been providing direct assistance to the African continent. We have already written off the main debt of African States — over $20 billion, a figure that places Russia firmly in first place among the G-8 countries. We intend to continue to help relieve the continent's debt burden. Relevant international agreements through the debt for development swap have been concluded with Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique, totaling $263.6 million. Russia's contribution to implementing the initiative agreed by the G-8 at the Camp David Summit in May 2012 — the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition — for the period 2013 to 2015 amounts to $110 million.

Our country is actively involved in international efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to African countries. Through Russia's contribution to the United Nations World Food Programme Fund in 2012, food assistance was provided to Djibouti, Kenya, Guinea, Somalia, Ethiopia and Chad, totalling $13 million. In November 2012, the Russian Federation provided emergency humanitarian assistance on a bilateral basis to Mali and Guinea; in February of this year, to Mali and Mozambique; and in June to Kenyan flood victims. The Government of the Russian Federation has decided to earmark a contribution of $1 million to the International Civil Defence Organization in order to provide humanitarian assistance to Lesotho.

States of the region are given broad trade preferences. Goods traditionally exported from least developed countries, most of which are in Africa, are not subjected to Russia's customs import duties. Significant assistance is also being provided to African countries in the areas of health and staff training. Russian institutes of higher education are currently training approximately 8,000 Africans, about half of whom are granted State funds. In 2012, the countries of Africa received around 1,000 stipends from the Russian State. This year we intend to increase that number again.

Russia attaches great importance to achieving the goals of the Decade to Roll Back Malaria. In 2011, we contributed approximately $20 million towards the implementation of the World Bank programme to combat malaria in African countries. Russia's voluntary contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria total $100 million. Russia's contribution to the World Health Organization for implementing the Global Polio Eradication Initiative is $18 million.

Despite the general decline over the past decade in the intensity and number of conflicts, Africa remains vulnerable to many forms of crisis. That has been shown in particular by the situations in the Sahel, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa.

The successful prevention and resolution of conflicts on the continent depends on the skilful use of a whole range of specific tools, including early-warning and response, preventive diplomacy, mediation, good offices, reconciliation and confidence-building measures. We also place great importance on systemic work to overcome the underlying causes of conflict, primarily those of a long-standing political, socioeconomic and humanitarian nature. Russia provides consistent political support to the efforts of the African community in that regard, and we stand ready to provide further assistance in strengthening the capacity of African States to counter crises.

We note with satisfaction the increasingly active involvement in crisis response by the African Union and subregional organizations in Africa. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union plays a central role in that regard, as do the Continental Early Warning System and the African Standby Force. We call for increased partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts. We note the joint efforts of both organizations on Darfur and Somalia and on the Sudan track. No less important is the need to further coordinate actions regarding the crisis situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia makes a considerable contribution towards developing a strategic policy for the international community and practical steps to strengthen peace and security in Africa. We are expanding our training for African peacekeepers and representatives of Africa countries' law enforcement bodies. Last year, Russia made a voluntary contribution of $2 million to the African Peace Fund.

Russia is keen to develop mutually beneficial and multifaceted cooperation with Africa of a long-term, strategic nature. We are confident that our partnership would be further enhanced by the implementation of the initiative launched by President Vladimir Putin of the

Russian Federation at the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) forum held in Durban in March. That initiative is designed to establish political and economic cooperation between BRICS, the African Union, NEPAD and subregional organizations.

Mr. Prosor (Israel): At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Under-Secretary-General Maged Abdelaziz and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for their commitment to promoting international support for peace and development in Africa.

Winston Churchill once said, "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty". No one would argue that the countries of Africa have not had more than their fair share of difficulties. Despite their many challenges, the continent is rich in talent, energy and hope — the building blocks needed to unlock the continent's vast potential.

My personal understanding of Africa does not come from Hollywood movies or stories in *National Geographic*. I speak from personal experience. I was a young child living in what was then Tanganyika, and I recall the warmth and the sense of community of the African people. I also vividly remember the feeling of excitement that followed when nations earned their independence. In the 1950s and 1960s, dozens of African countries pulled down the flags of their colonial Powers and raised their own. Since then, nation after nation has begun the difficult transition from war towards peace, from dictatorship towards democracy and from poverty towards economic stability.

We are here today to discuss the progress in Africa's development. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an initiative led by Africans for Africa. It provides unique opportunities for African countries to take control of their development agenda, to work together and to cooperate more effectively with their international partners.

From Zululand to Yorubaland and from the Nile River to the Niger River, NEPAD is helping to advance Africa's common goals. One could say that NEPAD is the launching pad for Africa in the new millennium. The nations and peoples of Africa have made tremendous progress on the path towards greater prosperity. Yet, for all of the promise and opportunity on the horizon, there are still daunting challenges, including extreme poverty, drought, famine, conflict and gender disparity.

In Burkina Faso the average working day for men is 8.5 hours, but for women it is 14 hours. In Gabon women perform 95 per cent of farm work and usually work 15 hours a day. In contrast, even during peak agricultural periods, men spend only two to three hours per day on agriculture. Studies show that if African women were given the same access as men to vocational training and technology, the African economy would expand by at least 40 per cent. That is a staggering figure and one that cannot be ignored by anyone in this Hall.

It goes without saying that the African nations have the primary responsibility for their own social and economic development. But the international community must do all it can to support their efforts.

In its earliest days, Israel was a fledgling State barely able to provide for its own. It was surrounded by enemies and struggled to cope with the absorption of hundreds of thousands of refugees. In 1958, then-Foreign Minister Golda Meir travelled to the African continent and saw the many challenges that the African nations and Israel shared. She said,

> "Like them, we had shaken off foreign rule; like them, we had to learn for ourselves how to reclaim the land, how to increase the yields of our crops, how to irrigate, how to live together and how to defend ourselves".

Driven by the Jewish value of "tikkun olam" — the obligation of every person to play a part in making this world a better place — we launched an ambitious programme to share our nation-building knowledge with the newborn countries of Africa. Today, Israel is an oasis of innovation in an otherwise arid region. We have more start-up companies than many of the world's wealthiest countries. Our doctors and researchers have made medical breakthroughs that have saved countless lives. We lead the world in green technologies, such as solar power and desalination. And our scientists have found innovative ways to vastly expand the yield, quantity and quality of crops.

Israel has been eager to share the secrets of its success with the rest of the world. Through Israel's National Agency for International Development Cooperation — known by its Hebrew acronym, MASHAV — we are sharing our innovative solutions with countries throughout Africa and around the world. Israelis are helping to save lives through organizations such as Save a Child's Heart, which provides paediatric cardiac care to children from developing countries who suffer from heart disease. That organization has helped thousands of children around the world, including from Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nigeria, Ghana and Angola.

An Israeli irrigation company introduced a low-pressure, low-cost drip irrigation system for subsistence farmers, providing them with enough water to raise crops year-round. In the Kenyan village of Kitui, farmers began using that system instead of hauling water from wells. They saw a 140 per cent increase in harvest yield and a 200 per cent increase in income.

Israeli scientists are also helping to overcome many of the most pressing problems faced by African farmers. After discovering that 50 per cent of every grain and pulse harvest in the developing world was lost to pests and mould, Israeli researchers designed inexpensive bags that protect crops from water and air. Those bags are being used by countless African farmers to keep their grain market-fresh.

There is a wonderful African proverb that says "If you want to go quickly, go alone; if you want to go far, go together". That is what NEPAD is about: Africans forging Africa's future, together.

A new wave of optimism is sweeping through the plains, mountains and savannahs of Africa. But in order for that optimism to take hold, every child, every family and every community must have the opportunity to build a brighter future. Let us therefore pledge to empower the people of Africa, let us commit to ensuring that they have equal opportunities and let us strive to ensure a brighter future for all of Africa's people.

As musical superstar Shakira says in her song "This time for Africa",

> "Today's your day,
> I feel it.
> You paved the way.
> Believe it.
> This time for Africa!"

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): At the outset, Japan would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports (A/68/220 and A/68/222).

Today Africa is achieving strong and steady growth. In 2012, the average annual economic growth rate on the African continent was 6.6 per cent. On the other hand, Africa still faces various challenges, including conflict and poverty. We must urgently strengthen our efforts to work with Africa so that it can take full advantage of its natural resources and growing population to realize economies and societies from which all people on the continent can benefit, including the socially vulnerable. We must also strengthen efforts to realize societies that are resilient against natural disasters, such as droughts and other crises arising from economic and social changes. Needless to say, we must also recognize that peace and stability provide the foundation for Africa's development.

Japan had the privilege of hosting the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) in June. The Conference was co-organized with the United Nations, the African Union Commission, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank. Since 1993, the TICAD process has been promoting African development by emphasizing both ownership by African countries and partnerships with the international community, including Japan.

Since the launch of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), in 2001, the TICAD process has been contributing to the realization of NEPAD priorities and serving as an important framework for partnership. With the support of an increasing number of co-organizers, as I have mentioned, TICAD has grown into an international forum with participants from African and partner countries, international and regional organizations, the private sector and civil society.

The year 2013 was indeed a special one for the holding of TICAD V, as it marked the tenth anniversary of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the twentieth anniversary of the TICAD process and the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity, which was the precursor of the African Union. The outcome documents of TICAD V — the Yokohama Declaration 2013 and Yokohama Action 2013-2017 — serve to align the Conference agenda for the coming five years with the continent's priority objectives and initiatives of the African Union and NEPAD. As the report of the Secretary-General indicates, such alignment will foster the implementation of continental programmes in ways that will enable Africa to meet its development needs effectively and ensure African ownership and leadership of its development agenda.

Also at TICAD V, Japan committed itself to providing an assistance package for Africa, utilizing private and public means of up to $32 billion, including

$14 billion in official development assistance (ODA). The emphasis is on infrastructure and human resources development, areas where African countries and the Japanese private sector have shown strong interest. For their part, African countries committed themselves to making infrastructure development their top priority through the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), as mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General. In order to strengthen and diversify sectors that will foster robust and sustainable growth, Japan strongly supports working through PIDA with financial assistance amounting to $6.5 billion for infrastructure.

What Africa needs now is private-sector investment. Japan will leverage private investment in Africa through public-private partnerships, including the provision of public finance.

Agriculture and food security are also key issues in Africa. In particular, rural development, with special care for women and smallholder farmers, also contributes to poverty eradication. Japan welcomes the fact that African countries are collectively committed, through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, to the goal of annually increasing their agricultural productivity by 6 per cent and allocating 10 per cent of their national budgets towards agricultural investment. Along with that initiative, Japan will continue to support the efforts of the Coalition for African Rice Development, which seeks to double rice production in sub-Saharan Africa to 28 million tons by 2018. The Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Shinzo Abe, held a summit round table on agricultural development, with the African regional economic communities, NEPAD and TICAD as co-organizers, during the week of high-level meetings at the General Assembly in September and reaffirmed the strategic approach of TICAD V to empower farmers as mainstream economic actors.

Climate change is another serious issue, as many of Africa's major economic sectors, such as agriculture, livestock and fisheries, are being increasingly severely impacted by it. Africa's efforts to address climate change include the strategy on climate change and drought risk preparedness and resilience. Japan has been contributing to those efforts through ODA projects, including the African Adaptation Programme. Japan also made a commitment of financial support on the occasion of TICAD V, amounting to $2 billion, to promote low-carbon energy.

Health constitutes the foundation of human development for growth, and progress in the field of health is essential to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Yokohama Declaration decided that universal health coverage should be promoted throughout Africa. Japan will promote universal health coverage in Africa with the goal that all people will be able to receive basic health services. At TICAD V, Japan announced that it had set aside $500 million to address health issues in Africa and had been setting up training programmes for some 120,000 health and medical service providers. Also, Prime Minister Abe, in his address to the General Assembly in September (see A/68/PV.12), announced his intention to make an appropriate contribution at the upcoming fourth replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

TICAD has made clear that peace and stability are fundamental prerequisites for socioeconomic development in Africa. African initiatives such as the African Peace and Security Architecture, in close cooperation with regional economic communities and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), play a pivotal role in peacekeeping in Africa. Japan will assist the APRM and other programmes to promote good governance in 30 countries. Also, Japan will help the capacity of the African Union's regional economic communities to implement their initiatives on peace and stability, including through financial support to funds.

Human security is an effective approach that focuses on individuals and helps build societies in which everyone can live with dignity by protecting and empowering individuals and communities that are exposed to actual or potential threats. In 2011, the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 66/290, on human security. Japan is determined to contribute to further promoting human security in all parts of the world in collaboration with all stakeholders. That is true in the case of Africa, since human security was included as one of the overarching principles in the Yokohama Declaration 2013.

TICAD V welcomed the African Union Commission as a new co-organizer. That made TICAD, in a true sense, an African-owned, African-led and African-managed process, in cooperation with the United Nations system, the World Bank and Japan. Japan sincerely hopes to strengthen both ownership by African countries and partnership with development partners in the TICAD process. We are also considering ways in which civil society and the private sector, whose involvement is critical for the long-term, self-sustained development of Africa, can be further incorporated into the process.

Let me conclude my statement by reaffirming Japan's unwavering long-term commitment to African development.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I speak on behalf of the Group of African States. To say the item before us is of great importance to Africa would be an understatement; I should say it is of vital importance for Africa.

I would like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his leadership and commitment in seeking to put Africa's agenda at the centre of the work of the United Nations system.

We associate ourselves fully with the statement to be delivered later by Mr. Ibrahim Hassane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency.

The year 2013 is an important one for Africa, as it marks the golden jubilee of our continental organization, the Organization of African Unity. It is in that context that we wish to underline the important role that NEPAD has played as a common and shared vision for Africa's renewal. That vision is premised on the need for Africa to take its rightful place in the global system, based on a self-defined transformative agenda and ownership. The Constitutive Act of the African Union set out the core values and principles that are necessary if the continent is to achieve democracy and economic development, while NEPAD seeks to implement those values and principles in a concrete manner on the ground.

Over the years, NEPAD has matured into the flagship development programme of the African Union. It programmatic activities in priority areas, including infrastructure, agriculture, health and technology, have promoted stronger African ownership through active and effective cooperation with partners. NEPAD has also been making immense contributions to the transformation of policy design and the implementation of Africa's development objectives.

In the same vein, the African Peer Review Mechanism has enabled the countries of the continent to learn from each other's experiences on issues of economic, political and social governance. Because of those milestones, Africa has indeed witnessed a new era of renewed momentum, and the foundations for the renaissance of Africa are being laid.

Over the past decade, several African economies have entered a high-growth trajectory. In addition, the number of conflicts affecting our continent has slowly subsided. Moreover, we are witnessing improved governance, with the resurgence of a democratic dispensation in many of our countries. No longer is our continent the marginalized part of the world, fit only for consideration from the perspective of humanitarian assistance.

Even during what are difficult times globally, Africa has continued to register growth. Undoubtedly, for us to achieve more, the global situation has to improve, including in terms of financing for development and the multilateral trading system. In that regard, we wish to agree with the comments and recommendations reflected in the report of the Secretary-General (A/68/222). However, despite the significant progress in accelerating growth and social development, as reflected in that report, persistent and serious challenges remain, including limited progress towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the ambitious Agenda 2063 Vision.

Negative global realities have continued to influence Africa's development outlook since the turn of the new millennium. The global financial and economic crises, worsened by the fiscal disarray and climate change, have impacted Africa's progress directly and indirectly. In that light, we feel that Africa has done its level best to address the many challenges it faces, which justified the appeal contained in the Millennium Declaration and subsequently led to a series of commitments made in the outcomes of international conferences in favour of Africa's special situation. Obviously, without going into the details, we can by no means assert that commitments made to Africa have been delivered. That can be seen in the lack of sufficient progress made with respect to the MDGs. The implementation of MDG aid has left much to be desired. A few countries have made notable progress on a large number of MDGs but, overall, progress has been largely disappointing. More therefore needs to be done in the period remaining before 2015.

For that reason, we call on the international community, including the United Nations, to redouble its efforts to ensure that those challenges are overcome. In that regard, it is our considered view that the international community has a responsibility to meet its commitments to Africa, which represents a special situation. There is a large deficit that needs to be addressed in the remaining period for MDG implementation and in connection with the post-2015 agenda, as well as in connection with the elaboration of the sustainable development goals. I wish to emphasize that the priority areas of NEPAD need to be front and centre.

For our part, I wish to assure the Assembly that Africa will do its best to achieve the vision of an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.

To conclude, I thank all those who have stood with us and who will, I am sure, continue to stand behind us.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At present, peace and development in Africa have entered a new, critical stage. With its booming economy, Africa has one of the fastest growth rates in the world. United and resolute, African countries have kept taking new steps to advance integration and sustained stability and development. Much headway has been made in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and Africa's international status is rising. At the same time, however, as the result of such factors as the international financial crisis and the slow pace of the global economic recovery, Africa is faced with a deteriorating external development environment. Regional conflicts and hot spots also keep flaring up and humanitarian crises have become more serious, posing huge challenges to Africa's efforts to seek peace, stability and development.

At the beginning of the second decade of NEPAD, the international community should continue to increase its attention to and engagement with Africa so as to achieve greater progress in the implementation of NEPAD and promote stability and prosperity. Africa is an important member of the international community. Its peace and security are closely linked to the interests and welfare of other members of the international community. Finding effective ways to help African countries tackle security challenges and achieve durable peace and sustainable development is an important task for the international community. In that connection, China would like to make a number of proposals.

First, all commitments to Africa should be honoured. The international community should scale up assistance to Africa. Developed countries should follow through on their official development assistance commitments, deliver on their promises of assistance and debt relief and help Africa in finance, technology and capacity-building. Developing countries should help Africa by enhancing South-South cooperation, which offers a framework for them to share experiences in poverty alleviation and development and to supplement North-South cooperation with a view to achieving common development. The international community should improve Africa's development environment and should increase support to Africa in various aspects, including finance, trade and debt relief.

Secondly, Africa should feature more prominently on the post-2015 development agenda. The international community should continue to help Africa accelerate progress towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. At the same time, priority attention should be given to Africa's special challenges and development needs in formulating the post-2015 development agenda, in order to ensure that it is in line with the NEPAD priority areas, which are centred on poverty reduction and aimed at promoting Africa's overall development.

Thirdly, the autonomy of African countries should be respected. The international community should recognize Africa's reality, respect the will of African countries and support them in handling their affairs by themselves. At the same time, in carrying out economic and technical cooperation with Africa, we must fully take into account the specific situation of African countries, accommodate their concerns and give them ample policy space in order to achieve mutually beneficial, win-win results and common development.

Fourthly, recent years have witnessed more pronounced instability and uncertainty in Africa, where regional hot spots keep flaring up and non-traditional security threats, such as terrorism, have grown. The international community should adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and, on the basis of full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of African countries, make active efforts to promote peace and facilitate negotiations with a view to resolving any disputes through peaceful means. Moreover, it should strengthen coordination and collaboration with the African Union (AU) and African subregional organizations, take concrete measures to help Africa reinforce its collective security mechanisms and support the settlement of African issues by Africans in African ways.

China and Africa have always been linked by shared destinies. Similar historical experiences, identical development tasks and shared strategic interests have bound us together. The China-Africa relationship is characterized by sincerity, friendship, mutual respect, equality, mutual benefit and common development. Since the establishment of the new China-Africa strategic partnership, we have deepened our relationship with African countries and regional organizations such as the AU. China actively supports African integration and has steadily stepped up its support to NEPAD. In 2012, trade between China and Africa approached $200 billion, and over 1.5 million people travelled between our two sides. By 2012, China's total direct investment in Africa exceeded $15 billion.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of China's dispatch of medical teams to Africa. Over the past 50 years, China has deployed 18,000 medical personnel to Africa, who have treated 250 million patients throughout the continent. During his visit to Africa in March, President Xi Jinping elaborated on the tenets of the cooperation between China and Africa, which include sincerity, real results, kinship and good faith, and announced a series of new initiatives to support Africa's development. Those include providing Africa with a $20 billion loan over three years, translating the partnership for transnational and transregional infrastructure development into reality and implementing the African Talents Programme.

Over the next three years, we will train 30,000 African professionals in various fields, while offering 18,000 scholarships to African students and scaling up technology transfer to and sharing know-how with the continent. China is actively following up on an initiative on partnerships for cooperation between its Government and Africa aimed at strengthening peace and security, and is steadily increasing its constructive participation in the peace and security affairs of Africa in order to help create the conditions for Africa's social and economic development.

China plays an active role in United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. Currently, we have 1,400 troops in six United Nations peacekeeping missions on the continent. China has increased its support for peacekeeping and capacity-building initiatives in African countries, the African Union and African subregional organizations. We have also provided the African Union with military aid valued at RMB 50 million in support of African efforts to resolve the continent's problems on its own.

China's development is inseparable from that of Africa and the world. China will always consider Africa a friend through thick and thin. While 1.3 billion Chinese people are working to make the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation come true, over 1 billion Africans are also trying to realize their dream of unity, self-reliance, development and prosperity. China is willing to join hands with African countries in expanding and deepening cooperation in all areas and in ways that broaden cooperation between China and Africa in a mutually beneficial manner, ultimately leading to the attainment of our shared aspirations.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt): At the outset, allow me to thank the Secretary-General, the Special Adviser on Africa and the Chief Executive Officer of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) for the report on progress in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/68/222) and the report on the causes of conflict in Africa (A/68/220).

NEPAD represents Africa's aspirations to take its its affairs into its own hands. It is an African-owned instrument aimed at reducing poverty and putting Africa on a path to sustainable development. NEPAD reflects Africa's common vision to achieve its development goals in specific thematic areas: agriculture and food security; regional integration and infrastructure; human development; and information and communication technology. Over the past few years, NEPAD has achieved a new mandate through the adoption of a new approach. It is working to change its management from a sector-based approach to one focused on programmatic and thematic activities. Egypt is a proud founding member of NEPAD. We have proposed an ambitious infrastructure project to establish a navigable route from Lake Victoria to the Mediterranean Sea through the Nile River, serving the economies of the countries of the Nile basin.

NEPAD's development focus is complemented by the governance focus of the African Peer Review Mechanism. This year marks the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Mechanism. It currently has 33 members that have joined voluntarily, representing more than 75 per cent of all African countries and the African population. The African Peer Review Mechanism is another manifestation of Africa's commitment to enhancing good governance and respect for human rights and democratic values.

African Governments and their partners must redouble their efforts to build stronger partnerships with the private sector and civil society, in addition to the mobilization of adequate resources to sustain inclusive economic growth that is more resilient to external shocks, as well as ensuring that the growth dividends are shared by all segments of society, including the most vulnerable people. Egypt is doing its part through a dedicated fund for Africa that finances a number of development programmes in many African countries.

Achieving NEPAD's objectives requires the support of the international community. It also requires the creation of a conducive environment that supports fair trade, alleviates the burden of debt on African countries, increases foreign direct investment and enhances Africa's participation in international economic decision-making processes. Within the United Nations system, that will mean the integration of the NEPAD agenda and programmes within the sustainable development goals process, as well as the broader post-2015 development agenda.

It is important to emphasize the need to sustain and consolidate the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, as the leading United Nations entity dedicated to advancing African issues. The Office needs to be empowered so that it can undertake its role as called for by the General Assembly to address the special needs of African development, coordinate the Inter-Agency Task Force on Africa and monitor the delivery of many international commitments towards financing development in Africa.

The international community has achieved significant progress in the elimination of malaria from developing countries, halving the number of deaths each year. However, malaria still kills hundreds of thousands of people every year, 90 per cent of them in Africa. We recognize the vital role played by the African Leaders Malaria Alliance, which is instrumental in helping to sustain the efforts exerted by African Governments, particularly in the areas of prevention, access to medicine and diagnostic tools.

Malaria has serious negative repercussions. It costs the world almost $12 billion each year. In order to succeed in combating malaria, the international community should provide enough resources for programmes aimed at early diagnosis as well as scientific research and the production of the necessary medicines, vaccinations and pesticides in Africa. Eliminating malaria requires a multisectoral approach that treats malaria not just as a disease, but also addresses the developmental and social aspects of it. That includes providing clean water, infrastructure projects and decent housing, among other things. The international community needs to encourage continued technical and financial support for malaria programmes in African countries.

Finally, it is important to note the relationship between peace, security and development. There is a need to focus on development strategies in order to address the linkages between the challenges of peace and development. Egypt calls upon all stakeholders, including African States, the United Nations, the African Union, African subregional organizations and, of course, international partners to adopt a comprehensive approach and to address the challenges to peace and security in Africa. In order to address the root causes of conflict in Africa, such an approach should use all the available tools within those organizations, alongside partners working in preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Mr. Dukali (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports submitted under today's agenda items (A/68/220 and A/68/222). I would also like to thank Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Africa, for his efforts to support the African continent.

I would also like to express my delegation's support for the statement just delivered by the representative of Ethiopia on behalf of the African Group.

Launched more than 10 years ago, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an African-owned partnership by African leaders committed to implementing a continent-wide development programme based on infrastructure, agriculture and governance, all of which are essential for reaching the goal of ensuring a prosperous continent that can enjoy peace. However, in spite of the progress made in recent years, particularly in terms of socioeconomic growth and development, the African continent still faces many challenges that have to date prevented it from achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals. In that regard, in order to help the African continent, development partners should redouble their efforts to support Africa's commitment to development, particularly those related to providing assistance. It is also important to end the current deadlock in the Doha Round trade talks. An agreement should also be reached on allowing countries access to global markets.

In terms of food, it is important to bolster agricultural productivity in accordance with the commitments undertaken by the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. It is also important to review our agricultural priorities in order to increase private investment, because the African continent is the region that has suffered the most from the impact of the global financial and economic crisis. At the global level, economic recovery is under way, yet it remains weak and unequal. Nevertheless, it is important to strengthen national efforts to achieve food security on the continent by increasing the budget allocated to agricultural development in rural Africa. There is also a need to improve how those efforts are managed. In that regard, the international community could provide technical support. We would like to emphasize that such assistance should fall within the United Nations framework for helping countries affected by desertification, drought and soil degradation, especially in Africa.

With regard to peace and security in Africa, we must bolster institutional cooperation for conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding and work towards post-conflict recovery, while ensuring stable economic growth, sustainable development, human rights, the rule of law and sound public administration. Overall, we also need to strengthen security-sector reform while promoting democracy, the rule of law and good governance in Africa. In that regard, the United Nations system and other partners should continue providing African countries with the assistance they need, so as to increase efforts towards peacebuilding and security on the continent.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to underscore that, as a member of NEPAD, Libya will continue to take effective action alongside other African countries in order to attain NEPAD's goals. That will enable us to reap the benefits of peace, growth and prosperity through coordinated efforts, and to implement cooperation agreements among a great number of African countries. All of that should, in turn, enable African countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to play an effective role in the global economic order. It should also help us attain the sustainable development goals in the post-2015 area, all the more so since our continent has human and natural resources that could allow it to attain such goals.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/68/222). The report coincides with a number of significant milestones for the African continent. The first of them is the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity. This year also marks 10 years since the African Peer Review Mechanism was launched. South Africa welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in implementing the goals of NEPAD over the past year.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Ibrahim Hassane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Agency, for the enriching briefings he has provided us this week. In the light of the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda here at the United Nations, those talks have been timely indeed.

The inherent message that has emerged from the discussions about NEPAD is that Africa is undergoing significant transformations. In comparison with the period just after decolonization, when we were cast as the dark and hopeless continent, years later the narrative has changed for the better. We should ensure that that narrative continues to improve with the Agenda 2063 Vision.

In response to socioeconomic transformation, NEPAD has been a crucial blueprint for Africa. It has been particularly important in contributing to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, as the African continent is still lagging behind on a number of MDGs, it is important to redouble our efforts, in the time remaining, towards focusing on the MDGs that are challenging us. More important, it is also imperative that the new development agenda be aligned and coherent with the needs of Africa and that it builds on the existing MDGs.

Over the past couple of years, NEPAD has yielded certain positive results. It has transformed, and is continuing to transform, historical legacies such as the lack of cooperation within the continent. Through NEPAD's infrastructural programmes, various corridors are being opened up to boost intra-African trade as well as development within the continent. For instance, there is the North-South corridor, a road and rail project from Cape Town to Cairo currently being championed by South Africa, as well as a number of other projects being championed by other countries on information and communication technologies, road and rail and gas pipelines.

On the agricultural front, South Africa notes that the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) has steadily grown in importance as a result of increasing participation by African Union (AU) member States. Significantly, 34 members have signed the CAADP Compact, and 23 have finalized their national agriculture investment plans. The CAADP is an African initiative that addresses the continent's agricultural development needs, an important fact since the majority of Africa's economies are agrarian. The CAADP is contributing positively to the eradication of poverty, as many countries are increasing their investments in agriculture.

With regard to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), my delegation is encouraged by the steady pace in accessions, notwithstanding its voluntary nature and the fact that the APRM is the first Afro-centric programme that promotes good governance on the continent. However, the challenges relating to the financing of APRM need to be addressed in order to ensure the effectiveness of the mechanism. South Africa has no doubt that those challenges will be overcome as Africa strives to consolidate the governance gains already registered as a result of the APRM. We also appreciate donor countries' ongoing support to our initiatives, and we call on the international community to continue such assistance, particularly at this crucial time when official development assistance is declining.

South Africa remains committed to supporting the continent's blueprint for socioeconomic development, as well as the APRM. We will continue to fund developmental projects within Africa through the African Renaissance Fund of South Africa, thereby meeting the NEPAD objectives. The South African Development Partnership Agency, set to replace the African Renaissance Fund, will also continue to provide development assistance.

The goal of providing people with access to the highest standards of physical and mental health is far from being achieved. Non-communicable diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases, and other diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS, are of global concern. In the light of today's discussion on malaria, although noticeable progress has been recorded in malaria control in Africa since 2011, my delegation adds its voice in support of strengthening the fight against malaria. We will continue to support the African Leaders Malaria Alliance. We would like to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership and other partners. One of our own compatriots, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, is the Roll Back Malaria Goodwill Ambassador and is continuing to do a phenomenal job in mobilizing resources for the plight of people who face the disease's scourges.

On peace and security issues, my delegation concurs with the Secretary-General's observation made at his 2013 Freedom Lecture at Leiden Univesity that the lessons learned from conflict and post-conflict countries demonstrate that

> "[t]here can be no peace without development [and] no development without peace, and neither can be achieved without full respect for human rights and the rule of law".

Since the establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council Architecture, the number of conflicts in the continent has significantly decreased. That can be further enhanced with United Nations collaboration with and support to African initiatives. South Africa is encouraged by the continued cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, in particular between the Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council. We appreciate the annual consultative meetings between the two Councils. A number of milestones provide a testament to the benefits of that relationship, such as the adoption of resolution 2033 (2012). In instances where the two Councils have cooperated positively, the results have been concrete, such as in the case of the African Union Mission in Somalia, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the endorsement of the African Union road map on the Sudan and South Sudan in resolution 2046 (2012), the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei and the joint assessment mission into the Sahel region. However, it is important that that relationship spread across the whole United Nations system so as to support economic communities at the regional level.

In conclusion, we express our special gratitude to the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Africa and his team for their sterling job in streamlining the African agenda in the work of the United Nations. Given the increasing volume of work on Africa and the need to follow up on a number of decisions and commitments made, it is important that that Office be strengthened.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): Indonesia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Indonesia would also like to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports pertaining to the agenda items that we are deliberating today (A/68/220 and A/68/222).

Without a doubt, Africa is making noteworthy progress, 12 years after the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was adopted. Nevertheless, tremendous challenges still lie ahead for Africa. We are also aware that efforts to accelerate Africa's economic growth are hindered by very substantial obstacles. African countries have also taken strides to overcome obstacles by becoming more interdependent with the global economy. However, that cannot be achieved by African countries alone, as creating sustained growth and peace requires partnership and cooperation.

Global partnerships and international support underpin NEPAD's success. Bilateral and triangular cooperation, as well as South-South cooperation, are important components of the global partnership. Ensuring an equitable global trading and financial system is central to creating sustained growth. The World Trade Organization talks, however, have yet to reach any satisfactory or meaningful conclusion. The ninth ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization, held in Bali, Indonesia, in December, will be one such opportunity to reverse the deadlock in trade talks. The conference should strive to strengthen multilateral trade rules, avoid protectionism and sustain levels of global trade, including the trade agreement affecting Africa.

For its part, Indonesia, through the New Asia-Africa Strategic Partnership and the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation in Jakarta, has built a solid base for extensive cooperation with Africa. Indonesia has assisted in capacity-building in agriculture and food security. We are continuously working with a number of countries in Africa to develop rice fields with varieties that suit the continent's weather and farming conditions.

Furthermore, we should not forget that public-private and private-private partnerships play an important role in expanding Africa's creative capacities.

Economic growth requires peaceful conditions. Indeed, the number of armed conflicts in Africa has steadily declined — from approximately 30 at the end of the Cold War to little more than a dozen today. From only three democracies, today there are 25 democracies of varying types in the region. However, conflicts are still occurring, and peace remains fragile in a number of places. Peacemaking, peacebuilding and development will therefore need to be continually deepened. For that, African citizens and their elected leaders must be the drivers of progress. Lasting success requires robust support from, and collaboration with, the United Nations and its partners.

However, sustainable development results ultimately depend upon Africans themselves. The principle of national ownership, which has been steadfastly advocated, particularly in the Peacebuilding Commission, remains the dominant principle. In that regard, Indonesia commends the important development and progress made on the ground in Liberia with the launching of its national reconciliation strategy, and in Sierra Leone with its successful elections, among other countries. We also underline that support from the international community and the United Nations in assisting post-conflict recovery in various countries in the region also requires deeper cooperation and partnerships, not only with the host Governments concerned but also with regional and subregional organizations. For its part, Indonesia stands ready to work with the United Nations, particularly through its active contributions to peacekeeping operations, its membership in the Peacebuilding Commission and its long-standing role in advancing mediation and conflict prevention.

Unprecedented efforts have been invested in the fight against malaria for over a decade, yet malaria remains a serious problem. Its prevalence, particularly among children and pregnant women, remains alarmingly high, especially in the African region. Therefore, in the 700-day countdown to the deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, we need to further accelerate efforts at all levels to halt malaria by 2015. During that period, let us seize the opportunity to reverse its incidence. At the global level, the countries with the greatest incidence of malaria, especially on the African continent, require accelerated assistance, including financial assistance, to procure and distribute life-saving interventions. Although the Global Malaria Action Plan has contributed significantly, further strengthening of and innovation in the financing mechanisms is vital.

We also need to further develop our capacity to track progress in malaria control. In global terms we can currently detect only one tenth of the estimated number of cases. We need to further develop and strengthen malaria-surveillance systems, including at the regional level. At the national level, we have to continue giving priority to the fight against malaria and integrate that goal into national health policies and frameworks. To reach the zero-malaria goal requires a multisectoral approach and cooperation that goes beyond the health sector. In that connection, Indonesia welcomes the launch of the Multisectoral Action Framework for Malaria on 24 September. We hope that the Framework will serve as the strategic platform for multilateral cooperation and coordination in eradicating malaria.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that Africa must be given a chance to find solutions that concretely address the continent's situations and realities by basing themselves on its population's basic needs. Only through such mechanisms will we see achievements in Africa similar to those in other regions.

Mr. Warraich (Pakistan): We thank the Secretary-General for the reports on the agenda items under consideration today (A/68/220 and A/68/222). We congratulate African countries on the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union, and on the tenth anniversary of its unique initiative, the African Peer Review Mechanism.

Africa is undergoing a transformation. Today Africa is determining its own destiny. The weak global economic performance notwithstanding, African gross domestic product grew by an average of 6.6 per cent in 2012. Seven out of the 10 fastest-growing countries in the world are in Africa. The 18 per cent decline in global foreign direct investment notwithstanding, flows to Africa increased in 2012. Higher trade growth in Africa as a whole, despite the deceleration in international trade in 2012, is a notable exception.

Africa today is progressing through Africa-owned and Africa-led frameworks. The New Partnership for Africa's Development represents the African leadership's vision of the continent's social and economic progress. Projects such as the Trans-Sahara Highway and the Trans-Sahara Gas Pipeline are a clear demonstration of Africa's resolve to unlock its immense socioeconomic development potential. The commitment and progress on achieving the budgetary allocation targets set for the health and agriculture sectors underline Africa's seriousness about realizing the promise of a better future.

Africa has taken up the challenges to its peace and security head on, and it is determined to succeed. It has established a solid Peace and Security Architecture. Successes in conflict resolution and management in Somalia, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire prove that Africa is forging ahead. The conduct of successful elections and progress towards greater political stability is increasingly replacing the narrative of conflict in Africa.

Although Africa's response to opportunities is commendable, challenges remain. They range from bridging the gaps in achieving the Millennium Development Goals to ensuring food security, employment generation, particularly for youth, and mobilizing financing for its huge infrastructure and industrialization requirements.

Despite the progress made, health challenges, including malaria-related ones, continue to cause tragic loss of life in Africa. According to the World Health Organization, the funding gap for malaria commodities and their distribution for Africa for 2013-2015 is $3.6 billion. The continued and strengthened international support to Africa's development efforts is therefore vital. The recent decline in official development assistance and in aid-for-trade indicates that pledges are not being translated into action.

International support is also essential so as to assist Africa to overcome setbacks to its peace and security.

Pakistan has a long-standing and abiding commitment to stability and progress in Africa. Our economic and trade relations with Africa are growing. In 2012 and 2013 we organized "Africa Shows" in Pakistan to further cement our economic and commercial ties. We continue to work with partners from Africa in the economic, social and technical spheres in the context of South-South cooperation.

Since 1986, under Pakistan's special technical assistance programme for Africa, hundreds of young African professionals received training in Pakistan in diverse fields, including public administration, management, banking, customs, accounting and diplomacy.

Pakistani peacekeepers have contributed to peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding in Africa. More than 132 of our peacekeepers have laid down their lives, 119 of them in Africa. Today out of 8,221 Pakistani troops in six peacekeeping missions, 8,075 are deployed in Africa.

We will continue our collaboration with Africa. The international community has started deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda. We wish to underline that that agenda must also respond to Africa's needs and priorities. The international community's commitment to assisting Africa in realizing its aspirations is critical.

Pakistan wishes Africa success and glory.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): I thank the President for convening this joint debate.

Malaysia wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports submitted under agenda item 63 (A/68/220 and A/68/222).

Malaysia would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate our African friends on the tenth anniversary of the African Peer Review Mechanism and its achievements so far. That celebration's significance is made even greater by the fact that it coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the African Union and the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, which has been tasked with global advocacy and support for Africa's development, in particular the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Malaysia attaches great importance to its relations and cooperation with Africa, especially in the areas of peace and security, trade, investment and the holistic development of the region. We truly believe that, in the framework of the solidarity involved in South-South cooperation, relations between Malaysia and countries in Africa have been enhanced through cooperation and mutual respect. As is reflected in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's *Global Investment Trends Monitor No. 12: The Rise of BRICS FDI and Africa*, issued in March, Malaysia is Asia's biggest source of foreign direct investment going to Africa. In 2011, Malaysia was the third-biggest investor in Africa, after the United States and France, with a total of $19.3 billion in investment in the continent. Investment from the Malaysian private sector has led to the creation of more decent jobs and the transfer of knowledge and technology, and has contributed to promoting Africa as a vibrant world investment destination.

While we welcome the progress made by many African countries, Malaysia also acknowledges the challenges and difficulties that some of them face in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. The renewed call for accelerating the implementation of the MDGs made during the High-level Meeting on the MDGs held in September (see A/68/PV.3) should be responded to by the United Nations development system and its developed partners. The decline in official development assistance for two years in a row has seriously undermined efforts to meet the MDGs, especially for least-developed countries, including those in Africa. Malaysia wishes to reaffirm its support in the MDG area and its willingness to continue to be an active dialogue partner with Africa within the framework of South-South cooperation.

Malaysia cooperates with African countries by organizing specific technical courses under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) and through triangular cooperation initiatives, such as the MTCP-Japan International Cooperation Agency-Africa collaboration. Malaysia has also launched specific cooperation programmes with African countries through dialogue platforms, which include private-sector involvement through the Malaysian South-South Association and Malaysian South-South Cooperation. As of the end of 2012, a total of 6,797 participants from 45 African countries had benefited from the MTCP. And in conjunction with the sixty-eighth United Nations Day celebration held in Kuala Lumpur on 24 October, the MTCP received the MDG Global Partnership for Development award in recognition of its outstanding contribution to United Nations development goals.

Malaysia remains committed to promoting South-South cooperation in Africa. In that regard, our Prime Minister led the Malaysian delegation to the Global Smart Partnership Dialogue (GSPD) 2013, held in Dar es Salaam from 28 June to 1 July. The theme for GSPD 2013 was "Leveraging technology for Africa's socioeconomic transformation: the smart partnership way". The Dialogue was attended by 14 Heads of State and Government from the African and Asian regions. During the Dialogue, Malaysia shared with others its new policies and approach for achieving its vision to become a fully developed nation by 2020 — namely, through a science-, technology- and innovation-based policy, Government and economic transformation programmes and the creation of a national key results area and key performance index. Malaysia was pleased to participate in GSPD 2013 and looks forward to participating in the next one, to be held in South Africa in 2014.

Malaysia also wishes to reaffirm its commitment to hosting a future smart partnership dialogue within the framework of the Langkawi International Dialogue (LID), at a date to be announced. Malaysia believes the Smart Partnership Dialogue is a good platform for its continuing engagement with African countries outside the bilateral engagement process. Malaysia's presence during the Dialogue in Africa and our commitment to hosting the LID, which it has organized since 1995, demonstrate our continuing support for Africa's economic development. The Dialogue has been successful in forging smart partnerships between Governments and the private sector in the South. Since its inception, a total of nine such dialogues have been held, aimed at fostering smart partnerships at all levels in society, engaging the political leadership, the civil service, business, labour, civil society, the media and the population at large. The success of the LID has prompted African countries to organize a similar dialogue in southern Africa, namely, the Southern Africa International Dialogue.

Malaysia welcomes the progress made by African countries over the past 10 years in the implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism, an initiative established under NEPAD. It has succeeded in fulfilling its objectives of encouraging and building transformative leadership and constructive national dialogue among African countries through an inclusive and participatory self-assessment process. The APRM has successfully fostered policies and practices directed at reaching NEPAD's goals of political stability, high economic growth and sustainable development, and accelerated subregional and continental economic integration. Although it is a voluntary process, the increasing number of countries participating in it indicates the importance that African countries attach to strengthening their institutions of governance. Malaysia hopes that more African countries will participate in future, thereby further enhancing the development of Africa as a whole. We hope that all such consolidated efforts will help our African friends to achieve their goals.

Turning now to the issue of malaria, Malaysia welcomes the launching of a road map on shared responsibility for and global solidarity on AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria response in Africa for the period 2012-2015. Malaysia has also had its fair share of experience with the disease of malaria. However, we are pleased to report that we have achieved major success in virtually eliminating malaria from urban and other densely populated areas of the country. Over the past 50 years, the number of malaria cases in Malaysia has declined dramatically. In 1961, there were 243,470 malaria cases in Malaysia; in 2010, that number had fallen to 6,650. The continued decline is the result of several effective strategies adopted by the Government, beginning with a malaria-eradication programme in the 1960s.

Malaysia has built on its experience and past achievements in order to strengthen current efforts and secure further commitments to eliminating malaria by 2020. To that end, a 2010 2020 national strategic plan for the elimination of malaria was formulated with the goal of eliminating locally acquired malaria by 2020. Malaysia is committed to eliminating malaria, as that would bring the country's population and economy many benefits, such as reduced health-sector costs and absenteeism, and improved education, productivity and foreign investment levels. The elimination programme will also ensure equality, since its activities must be implemented at all levels so as to include the impoverished, marginalized and vulnerable.

To conclude, Malaysia recognizes that, while a lot has been achieved, there is still more work required to halt and reverse that epidemic disease. We are prepared to share our national experience in that regard.

Mr. Kyaw Tin (Myanmar): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his insightful and comprehensive reports on the agenda items under consideration (A/68/220 and A/68/222).

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The year 2013 is a special year for the development of Africa, since it coincides with the tenth anniversary of the introduction of the African Peer Review

Mechanism and the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union. We welcome the designation of Africa Week and the holding of commemorative activities at the United Nations during this week highlighting the progress in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). We are pleased to witness the remarkable progress achieved by many African countries in recent years, which can be substantially attributed to the implementation of NEPAD. Despite global economic and financial uncertainty, Africa's economic growth has been relatively positive as a result of its continued improvements in macroeconomic policy management, structural reforms and the production and export of commodities. It is gratifying to note that many African countries are among the world's fastest-growing economies and fewer Africans suffer from extreme poverty. We are also pleased that Africa has achieved great progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Despite all those positive developments, Africa still faces many challenges. Millions of Africans still lack jobs, health care and food. Many countries will have difficulties meeting the MDGs by 2015. Economic uncertainty, political instability, natural disasters and a decline in development assistance have hampered the efforts of some African countries to develop their economies. It is therefore essential that NEPAD's efforts continue to address those challenges, particularly by prioritizing and mainstreaming issues of health, education and gender in their agendas.

Peace, stability and the prevalence of the rule of law are prerequisites for sustainable economic development. It is encouraging to learn that the majority of African countries have been experiencing stability. We recognize and commend the efforts made by the African Union and regional economic communities to undertake conflict-prevention and mediation initiatives, such as finalizing a continental conflict-prevention framework and developing support structures for mediation and conflict resolution. We wish, therefore, to add our voice to those urging the international community, including the United Nations, to enhance their support to and cooperation with the African Union and regional economic communities for conflict prevention, resolution and mediation within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the United Nations Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union.

We welcome the role of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in encouraging principled leadership and constructive national dialogue, thereby opening up more room for citizens in decision-making. The increasingly positive trend towards broader democratic practices in Africa is also commendable. According to the report of the Secretary-General, there were altogether 18 elections held in 2012, and another 17 are expected to be held in 2013. The regularity and frequency of elections have been fostering greater stability in the region in recent decades.

The progress made in the implementation of NEPAD and the success of the APRM show the good leadership and capacity of African leaders to bring more peace and development to their continent. At the same time, a strengthened and sustained global partnership will still play a significant role in bringing about peace, stability and development in African nations. In that respect, it is worrying to see that assistance from development partners is declining. Although development partners have committed themselves to help meet Africa's development needs, including through the implementation of NEPAD priorities, official development assistance to Africa dropped from more than $50 billion to $43 billion in recent years. We hope that the success achieved in all areas of NEPAD implementation and other ongoing governance and structural transformations will help convince development partners to honour their commitments.

We are confident that, with sustained external financial support, the strong determination of the Governments and peoples of Africa and sound economic management, the implementation of NEPAD will achieve greater progress and contribute to Africa's efforts to meet the MDGs. It is important for the international community, United Nations agencies and development partners to enhance their assistance to the African people in order to ensure that Africa's priorities and needs are fully reflected in the post-2015 development agenda.

As one of the organizers of the historic Bandung Conference, Myanmar wishes to reiterate the importance it attaches to the spirit of friendship and solidarity with Africa. Like many countries in Africa, Myanmar is a country in a process of rapid transition. In parallel with our efforts to promote peace, stability and national reconciliation, we have opened up our economy with bold economic reforms and the liberalization of economic policies. The new political and economic climate in Myanmar has opened up greater opportunities and potential for promoting trade and economic relations with our African brothers.

In concluding, my delegation would like to reiterate Myanmar's solidarity with and strong support for the efforts of the African countries to achieve greater progress in implementing the NEPAD agenda for the development of the African peoples.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 2011 (XX), of 11 October 1965, and decision 56/475, of 15 August 2002, I now call on the observer for the African Union.

Mr. Mayaki (African Union): This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity and the tenth anniversary of two African Union flagship programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD): the African Peer Review Mechanism and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

NEPAD has played a critical role in promoting democracy and good governance with the launch of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), in 2003. The APRM is a bold, unique and innovative approach to governance, designed and implemented by Africans for Africans. Through the APRM, African countries diagnose governance deficiencies, share best practices and commit to implementing solutions. That includes implementing transparent, predictable and credible public policies through national programmes of action. As a result, APRM findings have supported the institutionalization of domestic accountability, citizen empowerment and the improved delivery of services, thereby opening up political space for good governance. Although it is a voluntary mechanism, membership has steadily increased, to the current number of 33 African countries, which shows the significant progress in the deepening of the peer-review process.

The year 2013 also marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. Over the past decade, agriculture and food security have remained top priorities for the African Union and its NEPAD Programme. Africa recently endorsed the "Sustaining CAADP Momentum" consultative process as the main framework for engagement, with the declaration of the year 2014 as the African Union Year for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition. As of today, 50 countries have engaged in CAADP-related interventions, while 28 African countries have developed national agriculture and food-security investment plans with technical support provided by the NEPAD Agency. In mobilizing the necessary global partnership support for the CAADP, NEPAD is engaging in the Scaling-Up Nutrition initiative and the Group of Eight's New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition to achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1.

The future of African agriculture is brighter than it was 10 years ago, but a lot still needs to be done. In collaboration with the African Union Commission, regional economic communities and development partners, we recently launched the NEPAD Gender, Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Nutrition Programmes and the NEPAD Rural Futures Programme. Those initiatives specifically support women farmers and young entrepreneurs so as to enhance knowledge and skills and foster rural transformation.

Africa is at a critical juncture in its quest for development effectiveness. Without a doubt, Africa has been making tangible economic progress. However, we must address increasing social inequalities and the urgent need to lift about 400 million people out of poverty. In response, we must implement appropriate strategies to provide employment for an additional 215 million young men and women in the next 10 years. Importantly, a major aspect of that strategy is to promote value addition and sustainable industrial development as a means to enhance growth, job creation and economic transformation.

With less than 1,000 days remaining before the 2015 deadline, Africa has made remarkable progress towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals. However, challenges remain. Based on the decision of African leaders, multistakeholder consultations are being conducted aimed at synthesizing African priorities on the post-2015 development agenda. To that end, a bold African common position is evolving within the High-level Committee of African Heads of State and Government on the Post-2015 Agenda. That is taking place in cooperation with the African Group at the United Nations and the African Union. We therefore appeal for the common position, when finalized, to be taken into consideration in framing the post-2015 agenda and the sustainable development goals, bearing in mind Africa's special needs. NEPAD is ready to fully engage in monitoring the post-2015 agenda on the continent.

For Africa to truly become the next growth pole, the mobilization and effective utilization of our own resources is paramount. In that equation, private and public partnerships will advance the ideals of Africa's transformation. African leaders have championed the cause as a compelling agenda to energize the ownership of the continent's development. NEPAD has completed a comprehensive study on domestic resource mobilization, which was conducted in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Development Programme and the African Development Bank. Curtailing illicit financial flows from Africa is also a top priority.

The late Prime Minister of Ethiopia Meles Zenawi, who chaired NEPAD for six years, once stated.

> "Without the private sector, there is no development. Our policy is to have rapid and equitable growth, but you cannot have that without a clear division of labour in partnership with the public and private sectors."

Overall, regional integration remains the pathway to equitable and inclusive growth on an accelerated economic scale. NEPAD continues to strongly collaborate with the regional economic communities, which are the catalysts for the implementation of regional projects.

Permit me also to recall the words of Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and current Chairperson of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee:

> "The world has changed; Africa has also changed. Let us therefore change our paradigms and visions" (*A/68/PV.8, p. 16*).

It is of particular significance that the international community continues to be actively engaged in Africa's peace and development efforts. Indeed, partnership with Africa should truly reflect and support our transformative ambitions. In that context, NEPAD commends the outcomes of the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V), which took place in June. TICAD V represented an important milestone in Africa-Japan cooperation. Furthermore, we applaud the quality of the development partnership with the Governments of Germany, Norway, Sweden, Spain, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States of America, France and the European Union, inter alia. NEPAD appreciates the continued support for the implementation of its continental sector policy strategies. We equally commend Africa's strong partnerships with the BRICS countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and with the Group of 20, and welcome the increasing number of opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation.

Before concluding, I wish to particularly commend the sound collaboration between the NEPAD Agency and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, headed by Under-Secretary-General Maged Abdelaziz. We fully support resolution 67/294, which calls for strengthening the Office of the Special Adviser to enable it to effectively fulfil its mandate, including monitoring and reporting on progress related to meeting the special needs of Africa and coordinating the Inter-Agency Task Force on Africa. It is essential that the Office continue to play its role in supporting NEPAD at the United Nations, particularly with respect to the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the acceleration of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

I cannot end this statement without commending the leadership of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. In particular, we appreciate his commitment to the continent. As he stated at the commencement of the 2013 Africa-NEPAD Week,

> "What APRM does for governance, NEPAD does for development. Together they help Africa to advance along the path of democracy and development to benefit the continent's people".

(*spoke in French*)

We are convinced that the second decade of the implementation of NEPAD, the landmark African Union programme, as well as the implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism, a framework for governance in Africa, will benefit from the support of all States Members of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.